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No. 4

TALES OF WONDER

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by
H. WARNER MUNN

MASTER OF THE BRAIN
by
LAURENCE MANNING

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an
editorial

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FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION

TALES OF WONDER

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Cover by Virgil Finlay — Robert A. W. Lowndes, *Editor*

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editorial

Standards In Science Fiction

Science Fiction As Delight

WHEN WE COME to science fiction as *delectat*—written to delight rather than to instruct or to move to some sort of action which the author considers desirable—we can see at a glance that it won't be necessary to demonstrate that it exists. The exhibits are all around us; and if the bulk of science fiction magazines is not so high now as it was a decade ago, this is more than made up by the mass of science fiction available in both hard and soft covers.

In speaking of the three motivations for writing—*ut doceat, ut moveat, ut delectat* (to instruct, to move to delight)—we do not imply that one of these elements necessarily exists without the other two in any particular example; but we can discover, upon analysis, which of the three was most probably the axis of motivation. In some instances, the author offered so little else than his single element that the end-product emerged as poor fiction, in the case of the first and second motivations; some fiction written as instruction,

some fiction written as propaganda would have been more effective in essay form. But the entire range of fiction throughout the centuries shows that the author who has set out simply to delight, and sometimes nothing more, has often succeeded, where authors starting from the other two bases have often failed. The greatest works of delightful fiction, however, do carry elements of instruction and propaganda; in some instances the author was unaware of what he was really doing, while in others he was; but in neither instance did he fall over himself in the process. This is a generality in more ways than one, and the most that I can prove is that such exhibits exist. When I give examples (and I would deserve your scorn if I hesitated to do so) I am saying no more than that instructional or propaganda elements did not mar the story, as delightful story, for *me* — they may have for you.

The delightful story, of whatever type, has a *charisma* about it: it weaves a spell. Stories which have endured longer than a season can be said objectively to contain charismatic quality; but whether *you* are in any way spellbound by them is a subjective matter, and this is something that cannot be predicted to anything like a scientific extent. If I know you well, which includes knowing what particular stories have worked a spell upon you, I have a sporting chance of recommending other stories which you will find delightful; but I will not have a perfect score unless I leave the game discreetly after a few solid hits.

Let's look at what I have found to be the principal elements discoverable in science fiction tales which have had this effect upon me. The strength of the spell varies, of course, as does the degree of total success; however, my final test is whether I have been able to re-read the story with comparable delight a few years later. (Originally, this sentence began "whether I can"; this sounds good, but really it is nonsense; it requires data that is not presently available to me for confirmation. Whether I presently *think* I can enjoy re-reading a story that delighted me today is not evidence, at least not sufficient evidence; at best I can suggest probability: if I have found a particular author's past stories re-readable, and his new story seems as good or better than some of these old ones, then I can cite the new story as *probably* charismatic for me.)

THERE ARE six elements which presently strike me as being essential ingredients for producing charisma in fiction. I dare not proclaim there are no others because if I do the Law of Perversity decrees that I will think of at least one other one shortly after

(Turn to page 122)

THE MAN WHO AWOKE

by LAURENCE MANNING

(author of **Voice of Atlantis, Seeds From Space**)

2. Master of the Brain

Three thousand years' sleep, and Winters had awoken to a strange world, one for which there seemed to be no place for him. And now he was awaking again. Would time have brought a civilization nearer to his ideal by now? And when was now?

IT WAS REALLY a charming scene. Some huge hickories overshadowed it to the north and a great sequoia towered on the west, secluding the natural clearing to the warm southeast winds. Over its floor ran vines with bright green leaves and clumps of partridge berries showed red in the midsummer sun. All around—the wilderness! At the foot of a bank of Mountain Laurel was a slight depression in the carpet of brown leaves, as though water settled

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This is the second of five stories, each complete in itself, which ran in *WONDER STORIES* in 1933 under the over-all heading of *The Man Who Awoke,*—the first of two series by LAURENCE MANNING. Instead of employing the familiar but magical time-machine for the purpose of seeing the future, the author chose the more scientific (even in 1933) method of suspended animation. In the first story, which appeared in our last issue, we are told how Norman Winters achieves his aim of seeing the future before he dies by putting himself into suspended animation. He hopes to find a more nearly ideal civilization when he awakens in a thousand years or so. He will never be able to return to the past; his own world of 1932 is gone forever. His only choices are to adapt to the world in which he finds himself when he awakens, or try to go into the sleep again. *The Man Who Awoke* revealed a vastly different world and society from the one we know, but Winters decided it was not for him. The present story tells of the world of his second awakening. (The credit line for the author's earlier appearances in *FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION* relate to his second series of five tales, the "Stranger Club" stories, which we ran in earlier issues of this magazine, and in *MAGAZINE OF HORROR.)*

there in heavy rains. No human habitation nor any vestige of the human touch was observable through the undergrowth in any direction. This was strange, for this spot was once on the map as a fashionable suburb of New York City.

To a twentiety-century observer another thing would have been noticeable—the woods were of natural growth, but the sequoia is a native of the California coast. To trees, the sequoia was no stranger; it had stood there through thousands of squirrel generations and was now as natural as the hickories. One red squirrel, nosing for last year's nuts near the tangle of laurel stopped all motion suddenly and eyed the depression in the ground rather sharply.

Something strange going on, there it was again! Away like a streak of fire he darted and halfway up a tall sapling, where he hung upside-down and swearing like his betters. Nothing happened. Then he ran down again and over to the depression and cocked a listening ear a full sixty seconds. Suddenly he leaped away and made for his tree and as he did so the solid earth showed raw beneath the covering of dead leaves and a hole appeared into which the sunlight poured.

A shock of gray hair showed below the ground and it rose slowly, as a plant might push its stem up through the earth in spring, coming through the earth and leaves sticking to it and smelling of a long hibernation below the ground. Only this was not a plant—the hair belonged to a head and the head to the body of an old

man and this was so contrary to proper reason and conduct that the red squirrel stopped his chatter of protest and made off for more safe and sane portions of the forest. In deathly stillness the man brushed leaves and dirt from his person with a painfully slow and feeble motion and stood looking about him in bewilderment.

A scraggly crop of whiskers covered the lower part of his face, but the mouth showed firm and sensitive and the thin aristocratic nose loomed sentinel-like over the tangle. His hands were thin and terribly emaciated, and long nails, soiled with recent earth, grew unevenly from the delicate and tapered fingers. He was dressed in a leather jacket and some heavy, silk-like breeches of dark green, ending in leather leggings. In spite of the earth stains the man was immaculately dressed, incongruously so, for his face was lined and wrinkled and his body was wasted and thin. With faltering steps he made his way to a gray moss-covered boulder and sat down, still staring about him as though he were amazed by everything he saw. The thin white lips moved slightly and a barely audible whisper escaped:

"Gone! All gone! Eight thousand years! And nothing but wilderness!"

His thoughts went back to the pain and agony of his awakening, three days ago, down there beneath the ground. He could not remember it all, but fragments of visions came and went. That first reaching for the reviving medicine when the violet-rays had waked him! To move his hand ten inches — what an incredible journey that had been! Inch after inch, hour after hour, his fingers had crawled, dragging the powerless arm after them. And how had he ever succeeded in getting the bottle to his mouth? He could not remember that. His eyes had seen a red mist and his body trembled in every part with an agonized determination of will-driven effort that passed beyond reasoning. When he came weakly to his senses there was a miracle complete and a slight turn of the stopper had permitted a stream of liquid to enter his open mouth and burn there — for he could not swallow! But enough had trickled down his throat, even if more still had wet his couch.

That medicine — his friend the biologist had prepared it against this very need of his, five thousand years ago in the village among the trees. (All dead and gone and their very village forgotten now — for about him was no longer the regularly spaced grove of those men of the trees whose botanical genius had found an easier way to grow food than by cropping the soil.) That medicine had sent him into a drugged sleep from

which he awoke in a few hours, strong enough to reach for another drink.

Three days he had rested, recovering his strength and subduing his impatience to see what changes the years had brought, up above. Then he had donned fresh clothes from the vacuum chamber which preserved them from the fate that had befallen the tattered rags he awoke in, and had left the lead-lined chamber fifty feet below to feast his twentieth-century eyes upon a world surely transformed by five millennia.

With what eagerness he had made his way up the stone-walled tunnel, scraping and pushing at the drifted earth. And now—here he was! His time-journey was over, for unless he could rebuild his chamber he must live out such days as remained to him right where he was. The eight thousand years since it had been built here had done too much damage. He shuddered anew as he thought of that lead pipe covered with deep white-powdered cracks. What a miracle it had not given way before its purpose was fulfilled! A mere matter of a hundred years one way or the other! Suddenly his bent body seemed to straighten and his head was held higher.

"Come!" he said aloud to the silent woods. "This patch of shrubbery is not the whole world! Be off with you, Norman Winters, and see what is to be seen!"

THE VOICE WAS deep-pitched, but thin in tone, and sounded as though the man were rather testing the vocal organ than addressing anyone. But the words awakened anew all the little forest voices and the squirrels commenced to scold vociferously, as though protesting against this apparition from beneath the ground turning out to be only another animal.

Winters cocked an ear to the friendly sounds and smiled as he pushed his way through the shrubbery toward the east. He was looking for something and presently he came upon it—a great highway of green glass stretching north and south as far as the eye could see. This much was exactly as he had found it on his first emergence from the chamber five thou sand years ago. But no—not exactly the same, after all! There was a dreary unused appearance about it. Along the margins lay drifted refuse of the centuries—fallen branches, streaks of sand, litter of leaves—and close to the vitreous edge shrubs grew and occasionaly large trees.

He stamped his feet on the five thousand year-old surface and marvelled at its durability. Feeling lost in the emptiness of the world he set off northward and after an hour's slow walking came to a great crack in the highway, beyond which a section hundreds of yards long was uptorn and

splintered as if by earthquake (or could it be a bomb?). He was near the village he had visited so many years ago and looked about hopefully for signs of human beings, but in vain. No slightest trace of the village remained. Neither stick nor stone gave indication of ancient human occupation, but only the wilderness on each side of the hard pavement.

The fresh air and the exercise had set his sluggish blood to circulating briskly and some color had appeared in the pale cheeks, but he sat down to rest his aching muscles and to chew a pellet of condensed food from his pocket. What should he do now? He had enough food for a few days and some simple tools in his belt. Should he settle down at this spot and build himself a hut and gather nuts and fruit from the forest and shoot game for meat? He shook his head determinedly. Somewhere in his new world there were people. He must find them! Very sadly and soberly he continued his walking—choosing to continue northward—and did not see the flying ship pass so silently overhead, to vanish over the tree tops on the right.

But the ship had seen him. It was small and like a shiny metal cigar. It had been cruising low over the forest and upon sighting the man below had banked sharply and swung around behind him and to the right, so that its shadow would not apprise him of its approach. Silent as an owl it floated fifty feet up and like a bird of prey it swooped down . . .

TO WINTERS the shock was breathtaking—panicky. A great net of tough silk cord descended from the sky upon him and he was swept off his feet and borne high into the air within the compass of a mere second. For a moment he had an upside-down view of the world beneath, as he hung, dangling and swaying, then he felt himself drawn up swiftly and through a doorway in the floor of the ship which closed after him noisily. He lay on the floor of the cabin near the tail and twenty feet away stood an apparition dressed in the most glowing shades of gold and scarlet. The smooth satin trousers were of scarlet and the shapely legs were encased in gold. Golden also was the flowing shirt beneath the scarlet jacket and on the head a helmet of golden metal. The face was youthful and of great beauty, but whether man or woman Winters could not decide. The body, likewise, was soft and full yet in a nameless way sexless to Winters' twentieth-century eyes.

He was too stunned to make any attempt to escape from the capturing net and after watching him a moment with hard, eager eyes, his captor pulled a cord and he felt the net loosen upon him. In a few moments he stood shakily

on his feet and made a tentative step forward. His outstretched hand touched free air, so his eyes told him, yet it felt hard and unyielding as glass. With a startled exclamation he tried again and an amused smile parted the lips of the figure at the forward end of the cabin.

"Have you never seen the barrier ray before, wilding?"

The English words* were almost unrecognizable in that soft blurred accent, though the voice was low and sweet. Winters first thought: *So she's a woman, then!* Not for a second or two did the familiar syllables connect themselves in his mind with his own language. Then with a start of surprise he said, "What do you want with me? Where are you taking me?"

She smiled again. "What do we always want of you wildings?"

"I don't know what you mean!"

"Nonsense! You must have heard that we have hunted you for five hundred years and must know what we are about! You were very easy, wilding! What ever persuaded you to walk in the middle of the great highway? Didn't you know you would be caught?"

Winters thought rapidly a moment. "Wilding"—that must mean he had been taken for a man who lives in the woods here. Good enough! But why were such men hunted? He smiled disarmingly.

"Why should I fear to be caught? I am doing no wrong."

"Wrong! You are not living in the city doing your work and conforming to the laws of civiliaztion, are you? You are not . . . (she thought a moment in silence) . . . by the way, where were you walking to?"

"I wanted to find the nearest city, of course."

"Oh!" She eyed his unkempt beard doubtfully, then turned hesitatingly to the control board of the ship and pushed a button. She smiled at Winters saucily. "You *did* seem rather quiet; I have had wildings almost wreck the cabin. But of course, if you were *looking* for a city . . . there's none better than where we are going. We don't usually have such an easy time making converts to civilization. I have released the barrier ray and you may come forward with me now, if you wish. But do not touch anything!"

His brain bewildered with the hidden secrets of policy thus half revealed, Winters was soon comfortably seated looking down at

*The English language had not, of course, remained so completely unchanged as recorded in this narrative. Many new words had been coined and old ones forgotten. But in most cases the meaning was plain enough and long explanations and definitions which Winters had to undergo have been spared the reader by substituting twentieth-century words.

the miles of forest, while the ship speeded due north.

HIS NEW FRIEND introduced herself as Val-ya and seemed to be a very pleasant person. She spent so little time in guiding the ship and paid so slight attention to its controls that he questioned her about their course.

"We go to the Brain," she replied simply. "He will guide us."

"The brain?"

Val-ya stared a moment, then smiled. "Surely you must know . . . why, how quaint! Have you never heard of the Brain?"

"No."

"But for the past ten centuries it has ruled the world—does news travel so slowly in the wilderness?"

"I do not get much news—I live . . . by myself, you see. Tell me about it."

"How very quaint! No one will believe this when I tell it! The Brain is . . . well, It is a machine that includes every function of the human brain and surpasses it in most things. It is totally unprejudiced and absolutely infallible. The governemnt of our civilization has been given over to It. Only by Its guidance have we been able to reduce the working hours of mankind to one hour a week. Think of that, wilding! You are free to live in our city and enjoy all its comforts and such luxuries and pleasures as you have never imagined—all at the price of one hour's easy labor each week! I know you will say there are other cities—but ours is the actual residence of the Brain. Other cities throughout the world are mere stations controlled by It. Surely you would prefer to live in the center of the civilized world?"

Some familiar touch savored to the mind of Winters of the oldfashioned sales talk of his own times. What its purpose could be he did not know—could not imagine—but one thing was certain: He had been hunted and captured and was now being persuaded to live in some city. He decided to say absolutely nothing about his own affairs until he could learn more.

"Where is your city?" he asked.

"Half an hour to the north; beside the Great Falls."

"But this brain . . . do you obey it whether you like it or not?"

He noticed a sudden furtive glance toward the ceiling where a small black box protruded. His companion's voice had a slight tremor in it as she answered.

"Certainly . . . the Great Brain is infallible. Who would want to act contrary to reason?"

Winters persisted in his questions and found her strangely averse to discussing this phase of their life. He turned his attention to the landscape spread out below. Presently he made out a white mark far ahead against the green ground and this, as they drew

closer, proved to be a great wall hundreds of feet in height. It evidently surrounded the city of their destination, for the familiar outlines of Niagara lay beside it. Over the city a dome of clear glass stretched like a bubble and he could make out buildings and streets inside. The airship settled lower and lower and presently landed gently, close to the city wall at a point where a huge archway broke its smooth contour. Val-ya left him a moment and returned with a tall man dressed in green aand scarlet silk.

This is Supervisor Contrig," she said. "He will show you our city and, no doubt, invite you to join us here if you wish." With a flashing smile she turned to attend to her ship and Winters set off on foot with his new guide—a lean and sallow fellow whom he somehow disliked at first sight. Up to the great gates they walked in the hot sunshine and two scarlet and gold men stared at him curiously as they pulled the opening lever. A door opened and they entered the city.

"Why, it's cool!" exclaimed Winters.

"Of course, wilding! Did you think we would be content with whatever nature pleased to give us in the way of weather?"

THEY WALKED down a street toward the center of the city, flanked on both sides by factory buildings and workshops. The street was of green glass and the buildings of white composition—the same as the city wall. But inside the buildings, plainly visible through great glass windows, there spread to his view a scene like the dreams of a mad architect—like the inside of a museum of machinery all in automatic operation. Strange inventions and refinements of ancient mechanisms sprang up in window after window. Here was material to delight his historian's soul—the very kind of future civilization that dreamers and prophets had imagined back in the twentieth century—a thrilling vista of wonders and a consummation of the mechanical evolution.

Their street ended in a cross avenue, which curved beyond the sight and evidently encircled the city. Not many men were visible even here, and those Winters saw were hurrying along about their affairs. Moving platforms at three different speeds ran in both directions and a stationary sidewalk flanked them. On each side rose the buildings, great blocks of masonry which ended in graceful towers of shimmering metal and glass, close under the roof. The sunlight streamed through and glittered on the towers and Winters saw an airship pass overhead above the glass.

Winters asked where the workers were.

"In their workrooms, of course," said Contrig. "I will show you." He led the way into one of the buildings and guided Winters along a corridor. The walls were of glass and, looking through, he observed the "labors" of these folk of the hundredth century. Each person sat on soft cushions or lay on couches in private cubicles—some slept, some leaned over the partition talking or playing some kind of game on a board with their neighbors! The dresses were luxurious and of soft tones, setting off the remarkable beauty of their wearers. But as a picture of men at work, it conformed with none of Winters' preconceived ideas.

"These are at work," said Contrig and, at Winters' raised eyebrows, he continued. "While on duty each must devote perhaps an hour a day to his task. During that time they may not leave their workrooms (he used a word: labray, which Winters had to have explained). After a week at work they enjoy five weeks rest and recreation—usually at the pleasure palaces which I shall show you later."

"But what *work* do they do?"

"See that young woman—there! She has stopped her relaxation and is getting up to tend the distribution board. She is apportioning averages for the reserve stores. And that elderly man is collating orders for the Karma vats and routing them through the automatic machines. Most of the work, of course, is very light and agreeable in nature. There *is* some heavy work—machine designing and so forth under the guidance of the Brain—which is done only by our highest ranks. I as a supervisor am privileged to do such work," and he smiled, as Winters thought, in a precious smug fashion.

The pleasure palaces proved to be a combination of resort hotel and Mussulman's paradise devoted in equal proportions to drinking and making love. All very well once in a while, Winters thought, but day after day for five weeks . . . ! He scarcely noted the things they passed until they came to a great reception room thronged with people. Here they stood a minute looking about them. Winters had an idea:

"But the more serious minded men . . . scientists, planners . . . where are they?"

The supervisor stared haughtily. "This is the city of the Brain!" he said. "How should mere men hope to better His work? He is infallible—we are full of human weakness and frailties."

"I should *not* like to live here!" said Winters decidedly.

"That is as you please. We should be glad to have you, but . . . that is the way out, over there. You can't miss it." and he turned on his heel.

2

The direction seemed exactly wrong to Winters. He started down the passage indicated, however, and had not gone fifty feet when a small arched door set in from the wall opened a crack and a white finger crooked itself at him. Hesitantly he paused and stared at the dark crack, but could see nothing except that beckoning hand. He stepped to the door and it opened before him to reveal a man in flaming crimson silk. He placed his fingers to his ears and made a quieting sound with his lips—a curious gesture which Winters understood to mean secrecy.

"You are the wilding who came in today? Good! I see you did not like our . . . *life* here! That enables me to trust you. There are others who do not like it. If I save your life will you help us change ours?"

He peered eagerly at Winters, his thin hawklike nose and high cheekbones giving him a particularly shrewd look. Winters was nonplussed.

"I don't know what you mean! If you should save my life I would, I suppose, be grateful and return the favor if I could."

"Good! Then I'll save it for you. Turn yourself around and hurry back to the Supervisor and tell him you have changed your mind—that you want at least one vacation at the Pleasure Palace. Hurry!"

"Fool! I save your life and risk mine by telling you! Do you suppose the end of this passage leads back to your wilderness? Do you suppose the Brain ever lets a man escape once His fingers clutch him? *Death* awaits at the end of your passage, wilding! Hurry back, man, hurry!"

And Winters found himself pushed out and the door closed softly behind him. In the crimson man's face had been truth and force; Winters hastened to retrace his steps. In a panic he found his way to the big hall but Contrig had disappeared. He hurried over to the passage along which they had come together and was relieved to see him at the other end of it. He caught up with him in a few minutes and plucked at his sleeve, panting.

The supervisor was a trifle suspicious of such a sudden conversion and Winters sweated out his simulated desire for the fleshpots until he succeeded in disgusting himself. But he succeeded in soothing Contrig's scruples and brought a smile of unclean amusement to the man's face.

So it happened that within the hour Winters found himself seated in a cubicle of his own and a capable if flirtatious young woman leaning over his shoulder and showing him how to route food from automatic factories to distri-

buting centers. As a task it was puerile and in ten minutes was wearily obvious. But his instructress remained some little time after that . . . Winters revised his estimate as to the sex quanta of these people of the future! Outward appearance, he decided, was no sure guide in such matters.

FOR TWO HOURS he sat watching the control board and spent three minutes of that time correcting an error in routing. The rest of the time he did nothing.

Presently a gong struck and he observed through the glass partitions that his neighbors pushed various buttons set in a silver panel on the wall. He knocked at the glass and the man in the next cubicle came over and lowered it out of the way.

"What is everyone doing?"

"Food, wilding. You order what you want to eat. Shall I order for you this first time?" and amusedly he leaned over the partition and pushed three buttons.

In five minutes the panel swung aside and there stood a set of sliding shelves with drink and food. Winters had three dishes to choose from and found one highly spiced and the other two insipid. He was hungry, however, and ate nearly everything and found the drink delicious—though heady. He was sleepy and noticed his neighbor attach a gold braclet and anklet to himself and fall luxuriously back on his couch.

He asked whether it was the sleep period and was informed that a worker could sleep any time he wanted to, but that he must put on the Brain's controls if he did so. Then he observed that a fine wire led from the gold bracelet to a plug in the main control panel of the cubicle.

"When the panel calls for attention, an electric shock wakes you up. Probably you will have nothing to do now until tomorrow morning, but while you are on duty you must be always available."

Winters thanked him and put on the gold bands and was instantly in a deep slumber. It lasted a full twenty hours, for it was morning when a sharp pain woke him. He looked around for a dazed moment and noticed a red light over his panel. Then his whole being was aroused by the indignity of the electric shock which brought him to his feet in a hurry. He removed the anklet and wristlet and resumed his duties.

There was fifteen minutes' routine work and just as he finished it the gong struck and he went over to the food panel and pushed every button on it, for he was ravenous. No man could have consumed all that food, but he left what he did not eat to be removed with the other dishes on the sliding shelf. He was enormously bored with

the life he led. There was nothing he could see outside of his cubicle except his neighbors on right and left. He discovered, however, one panel on the wall below the glass which he had not seen before and he asked his right-hand neighbor what its purpose might be.

"That is your news and amusement control."

"What does it do?"

"Press the lower button and see!"

He did so and instantly a six-foot space on one side became suffused with light and voices spoke. After a startled second he perceived that a play was going on somewhere and being relayed on a screen and loudspeaker. He sat down to watch it when he heard his neighbor rap on the glass partition. He lowered this by moving a lever.

"Better put on your controls," warned the man and nodded meaningly at the panel board.

Winters donned the anklet and bracelet once more and did not again take these off while he remained on duty. The play proved uninteresting after the first ten minutes—it was all about the problems of a woman with seven lovers—and he pressed another button and saw on the screen a great sweep of country as if seen from an airship. This was more to his taste and he watched, absorbed the broad stretches of forest and caught his breath when the white walls of a great city came to view. Then on over a sheet of open water and cruising above charming islands set in sapphire seas. It was travel made easy! Thereafter he spent most of his time watching the screen, while a voice explained the sights and named the towns that were passed. For a week he ate and slept, did his little business at the controls and enjoyed the travelogue. It was restful and quiet and he gained strength daily.

In the cities were millions of observing and sound-detecting fixtures hidden in walls and ceilings. No detail of action escaped the Brain; no sooner did a problem or crisis arise than its solution was presented by the All-seeing lord of life. Even the planes, Winters learned, carried an observation box and in the event of an attempt by the pilot to leave his ship or in any way disobey his orders an enormous charge of explosives was detonated—destroying ship and ill-doer together. On the other hand, no action of virtue escaped notice and reward. Such men were promoted to the higher ranks and enjoyed great privilege and powers.

The first rank was that of supervisor, who had entire control over the workers' hours and the allotment of duties. Above these were the pilots of airships and men of action—explorers, missionaries (for the few remaining people in

the wilderness were constantly being coaxed into the cities) and the artists, including musicians, painters, playwrights, actors, etc. Still above these were the mechanics and scientists, and at the head of all were the educators, who supposedly controlled the teaching and training of the young, and the preparation of data with which the Brain itself was supplied — but this function had long been debased into a mere formal acceptance of the suggestions put forward as thinly veiled commands by the Brain.

Each class wore characteristic colors which might not be infringed upon by lower classes. The Supervisors wore red and green; the men of action dressed in gold and scarlet; the artists pure blue; the scientists sheer white; and the educators gleaming black. As for the workers, the material of their clothes was not of such a high lustre and the colors were more varied — but kept below a certain undefined standard of brilliance, mainly pastel shades.

Winters once asked his right-hand neighbor, with whom he became rather friendly, "What rank is dressed in bright crimson?"

With a start of surprise the man looked at him and then furtively glanced at the corner of his cubicle. With downcast eyes he replied "That is the color of the Brain. Only His personal mechanics dress in crimson. We have nothing to do with *them.* I am surprised you have even seen one, for they seldom walk in public."

And he refused to talk about the matter further, although Winters was full of curiosity and questions. Winters eyed the corner of his cubicle speculatively, supposing that a detecting device must be concealed there, but if so it was subtly concealed, for the ceiling and walls met in a perfectly smooth joint. He did a great deal of thinking about the state of this civilization. It was curiously like twentieth century ideas of Heaven!

HERE WAS A sort of infallible Deity — all-knowing, omnipresent. A personal God, in fact. He punished and rewarded without error. The labor was so slight as to almost amount to perpetual leisure and the workers could scarcely wish for more luxury or comfort, yet Winters felt an uncomfortable sort of resentment about it all and could readily understand an attempted revolt such as the crimson man had hinted on the day of his arrival in the city.

The human race did not really need a God to show them how to live, as he thought it out. What was needed was an unsolved problem on which Mankind could exercise its ingenuity and inventiveness. Only by work could it evolve to a higher plane of existence. He — the observer of the centuries as they passed — saw this truth so

plainly that he wondered at the stupidity of the human race in permitting itself to be so fed and housed like cattle. He had begun to feel some warmth on this subject and to wish that he might see the crimson man once maore when his work period ended.

Supervisor Contrig gave him his release orders.

"You will go first to the clothes studio and be dressed properly. Then find the South Pleasure Palace and ask for your accommodation. It is booked under your own name, Winters. You have done your work well enough and now merit the fruits of labor—ha ha! I hope you enjoy yourself!"

His accommodation turned out to be one room and a bath. The walls were in light mauve, deeper at the floor and paling out toward a violet-tinted ceiling. No pictures adorned the walls, but two control panels which he recognized as food and amusement inlets. His new clothes seemed very comfortable and soft and, since the entire city's temperature was controlled, their thinness was not at the sacrifice of warmth. He found how to turn on the tub by himself and soaked a steamy hour before retiring to a built-in couch with amazingly deep springs. Here he slept the clock around, had some unnameable sort of gruel for breakfast (ordered by blindly pushing a button) and set out to explore the city—a new man inside and out.

The arrangement of the buildings was this: In the center rose the great Temple of the Brain and around that the four Pleasure Palaces, named for the cardinal points of the compass. A broad avenue encircled this inmost group and outside of this line were the work buildings, factories and so forth, up to the outer wall of the city. Winters' first thought upon leaving the South Palace was to explore the working districts, but on crossing the avenue he was stopped by a Supervisor in red and green.

"This is not the hour of workshift."

"I was just seeing the city—my first leisure period."

"That is not permitted. It would not do for those at work to see you at leisure!"

"I may not go into the outer sections of the city?"

"Of course not! You are at leisure. What manner of man are you that you forsake the Pleasure Palaces for the streets?"

Back went Winters. There were, then, only five buildings he could enter. He started at once for the entrance to the Brain Temple and at its massive steel-grilled arch a man in crimson stopped him, shocked at this casual attempt to enter sacred ground. No one, it appeared, under *any* circumstances, might enter the Temple—except only the crimson-robed Brain-Mechanics themselves.

And so, by a process of elimination, Winters turned to the Pleasure Palaces. Since all four were seemingly identical, he chose his own building to commence in. The entrance hall contained ranks of elevators, passages leading into the vast interior, and a control desk behind which two attendants lay on couches fast asleep. The pressing of a button would have awakened them both, nerves tingling from the shock, out of their slumbers—but Winters forbore to do so. Instead, he chose one of the passages by hazard and sauntered down it.

MANY CLOSED doors were passed before he came upon a wide archway and entered a hall in dark, glowing red—almost black. At one end on a raised platform running from wall to wall a line of flame flickered and this was the only illumination in the room. Perhaps a hundred people danced upon the bare floor, two and two, swaying on silent feet to the most weird sounds Winters had ever heard. They formed some sort of music with a rhythm of constantly changing pulse and unstable tone, blending from harmony to harmony in indescribable fashion. The room was much warmer than any other place he had visited and this—or a combination of unknown psychic factors—seemed to bring the blood rushing to his temples where it throbbed in time to the devilish song of the flame. He backed out bewildered into the passage and as he did so a young woman in diaphanous silk approached him. She eyed him with sudden interest and passed slowly, then stopped and turned back to smile at him. Winters fled.

Presently he stopped, panting, for he was at the end of the passage and here a great hall was brightly lighted and men and women stood about or sat on couches amidst a profusion of great shimmering plants in gorgeous flower. He approached one of these to discover that the stem, leaves and petals were all cleverly blown in colored glass. And as he stood there someone tapped him softly on the shoulder. He turned quickly to recognize his neighbor in the work-cubicles.

"Well, wilding, you seem lost! Don't you like our fair city?"

"Haven't seen much of it yet and I'm afraid I don't understand much I've seen."

"It's really very simple . . . but you have no Karma, may I get you some?"

"What is Karma?"

"A thorough innocent, eh? That is our joy juice—our solace in trouble and the sharer of our joys—our water of happiness. Wait here!"

He was gone a minute and returned with a glass of amber liquid which he insisted that Winters drain. There followed all the sen-

sations of an old-fashioned cocktail. A warm glow spread from the pit of his stomach to the top of his head and he felt ten years younger.

"And when you want another, just go over to any of the pillars in any room in the Palace and press the pink button. Good stuff, isn't it? The beauty of it is that if you've had a little too much it counteracts itself and you are instantly sober. If you don't *want* to be sober that's embarassing at times, for you have to start in again and work back to the right stage. Eight drinks is my limit—though some can go ten and even twelve. The Palace is divided into eight zones, you know, each of which is entered from a separate passage at the control-hall. Each zone is for the use of those who have had the corresponding number of Karmas. This is the one-Karma passage and rather mild. You should see the eighth if you want a real sensation! Or even the seventh!"

AND HERE a group of young people broke in on them and dragged off his friend to some noisy party in one of the private rooms down the passage and Winters stood there reflecting upon this amazing civilization into which he had stumbled. Winters was no prude; he enjoyed a good time as well as another man. But he was a practical thinker and a scientist. This perpetual urge towards more and more leisure that might be wasted in the pursuit of mere physical joys seemed to him a tragic frailty for a race to possess.

What would five thousand more years of this sort of thing produce? When the slight physical effort still required of the workers was taken care of by automatic machinery and the last necessity for thought avoided by an enormously expanded machine brain? Was it for this that, back in the twentieth century, men dreamed and sweated and sacrificed themselves? It seemed somehow too inadequate a goal for a race of humans that had risen painfully from primeval slime and up the long ages to reason . . . Why, the Brain was a curse!—An ominous threat to Mankind!

Of course, he mused, it had introduced many new and sensible changes in human life: education, for instance, was no longer a haphazard process under the control of impatient parents. Children were now placed in special cities of their own and brought up under the most careful of regimes. Yet here, too, the Brain had inflicted its will-destroying philosophy upon the new generations. The reverence with which young people regarded that piece of machinery, Winters thought to himself bitterly, amounted to *worship!*

What hope for the initiative and inventiveness of the race could

there be under such a religion? And what was there left in this world for a man to do? The world was run upon electric power produced by waterfalls (as in this particular city) or by volcanic heat or solar energy. Where portable power plants were required, automatic motors ran on atomic power. Nearly all machinery was automatic—the synthetic food laboratories, the cloth looms using synthetic fibre, the uncanny metal-working machine shops—why, the Brain did not *really* need human beings at all! Could it be that people existed only upon its sufferance? When it had evolved sufficient automatic devices to care for its own needs would it destroy these servants of flesh and blood and live its own cold metallic life in solitary grandeur upon a lifeless world?

Winters shuddered at the prospect—yet for the life of him he could not find a flaw in his reasoning. His own work at the control board—how puerile! What purpose could it serve that could not better be handled by a machine? It did only one thing—it kept Mankind occupied and allayed any suspicion of its final inevitable doom!

And as he stood there, fuming, a soft hand covered his eyes and a low feminine giggle sounded behind him. He wheeled about to gaze in dismay on the lady of the passage and once again he forgot his dignity in startled fright—there was the light of the huntress in her eyes that started his feet going before his wits could catch up with them. He took one of the automatic elevators to his floor—the twelfth—and felt rather foolish, but quite safe once more. He proceeded to order a meal and turned on the travelogue to make a journey by proxy in the broadcaster's airship.

3

IT WAS TWO DAYS before he ventured down to the public rooms once more. This time he chose another passage (the five-drink zone as it happened) and soon came upon a sunken room floored in cushioned silk where seven nude women danced silently in a rosy glow of perfumed mist while several dozen people lay prone along the walls looking on. He stood a moment, enthralled by the beauty of the scene and when he turned to make his exit—there stood his pretty Nemesis! He tried to brush past, but she linked an arm in his and brought her face close to his ear. He could not believe that these were the words he heard: "The man in crimson said you would be grateful when he saved your life."

Winters stood still, utterly dumbfounded.

"At least *pretend* you don't feel disgust at the mere sight of me!

It so happens that I have seen more desirable males than you myself, you know! Come over here and lie down beside me—and pretend to be interested!"

He started to speak but she made a warning gesture and he lay down quietly on the soft cushions. Presently the swirling mist enveloped them.

"I have been trying to reach you for three days. I could not go to your room, because the Brain has eyes everywhere. Here, if we whisper and pretend to be . . . er . . . to have other interests . . . we are fairly safe."

"What do you want?"

"The time has come to redeem your promise to the man who saved your life."

"Well . . . if it has anything to so with freeing the world from the Brain I'll not refuse!"

"Good man! I'm glad you feel that way—you are the only man in the world that can help us."

"I? What can I do that you cannot?"

"You have been less than two weeks under the Brain. Therefore you can enter the Temple itself. We cannot do this."

"But why not?"

"I don't know—exactly. After you have lived in the city of the Brain for a month or so something happens to your will-power. If you stand within a hundred feet of the Temple you lose all desire or intention and must be led away again until you recover. The longer you live here, the farther you must keep from the Brain. But right now you could lay your hand on the very metal that forms it!"

Winters pondered this amazing information a moment.

"But how about the mechanics who work in the Temple?"

"They must wear metal helmets with a screen of magnetic force."

"And even so—the leader of this revolt wears the crimson, does he not?"

"You don't understand. The helmets are issued only for definite jobs and always three at a time. At the entrance to the Temple three men in helmets meet and enter. They do not know each other, for the helmet disguises them. One only carries tools. The other two carry weapons which are kept aimed on the worker the entire time he is in the Temple of the Brain. At the least suspicious motion . . . you see?"

"Yes of course. The Brain is cautious it seems. Why?"

THERE HAVE been other revolutions, of course. One five hundred years ago was the last. Half the world was wiped out and the Brain won. But this time He will lose!"

"What is to be done?"

"It is very simple, really, so far as you are concerned. There is a little passage into the Temple off

the corridor of the first zone here. It is unguarded, because the second door is kept locked that leads into the actual machinery of the Brain and because no person can some so close, anyway. But you can, wilding! Between the two doors is a small courtyard. Down along one corner of this runs a cable sheathed in lead. You will take with you a knife to cut the lead, and a small flat transformer. Your job will be to attach the leadins of the transformer and then sever the cable. It is very simple—thanks to five years of hard work and planning by the man in crimson!"

"But what good will that do?"

"The Brain runs upon electricity. It is getting direct current. You will change it to alternating current. The whole association of ideas that is the very basis of reason will be shattered and distorted. The Brain will immediately go . . . insane!"

"Great God! But won't the Brain see me at work?"

"No. The courtyard leads nowhere and the light is poor and there is no detector installed there . . . Hss-s-sh! Quick, stroke my cheek as though you were making love!"

The rosy mist lifted slightly and some of the couples were sauntering past, while the dancers had vanished. Presently the girl rose to her feet and Winters went with her down the corridor, his mind in a whirl of excitement. She led him out of the zone and up the first corridor to the room of the dusky red flame where she held out her arms and they swayed in a close dance—her mouth close to his left ear.

"We must not remain much longer together," she whispered. 'I will take you to the hall at the end of this corridor and a man will speak to me—remember that man! He has the transformer, concealed in his clothes. You will return to your own room and on the way someone will give you the transformer and a cutting tool. Keep these always concealed, for every wall has eyes in this city! Act as though someone were always watching you—you will be right!"

"And where shall I get the plan of the courtyard?"

"I will dance it on the floor of this hall. You go forward, thus, to a glass ornament in the great room and step to one side—so. Then slide behind it and you find a small door—open. Then turn to the right and go seven steps and if you reach your hand to the level of your chest you will find two loose bricks in the wall. Behind these lies the cable. The transformer is specially built to slip in the cavity so that the bricks can be replaced and when the Brain Mechanics rush in to search for the cause of the trouble they will not see anything—until too late!"

In a few minutes they proceeded along the corridor—the girl, whose name, Winters learned, was Clethra, making vivacious small talk and ogling him playfully—and came down to the great reception hall. Almost as they entered, a tall, dark man sauntered up to Clethra.

"Steuvlan has been looking for you everywhere, Clethra," he said severely and Winters thought his voice unnecessarily loud. "You had better go find him at once and . . . I'd not say anything about this wilding to him if I were you!"

THE GIRL's eyes widened in fright (Winters had the feeling she was acting it for someone's benefit) and she left the two men together. His companion eyed Winters with a dry smile.

"You are playing with fire, I'm afraid. You would do well to keep out of sight for the next few days . . . bother! There I've turned my ankle. Help me over to that couch will you?"

Winters was suspicious and bewildered, but put an arm under the other's shoulders and felt something hard thrust into the fastening of his trousers at the waist, hidden by the concealing robe.

"You are suspected," came a startling whisper. "You must go through with the plan in the next sixty seconds." Then aloud: "Thanks. It's really nothing—you had better get out of sight before Clethra's lover arrives, wilding. It might be well not to go back by the corridor, either—there's a small exit in that corner (nodding to the left) behind the glasswork."

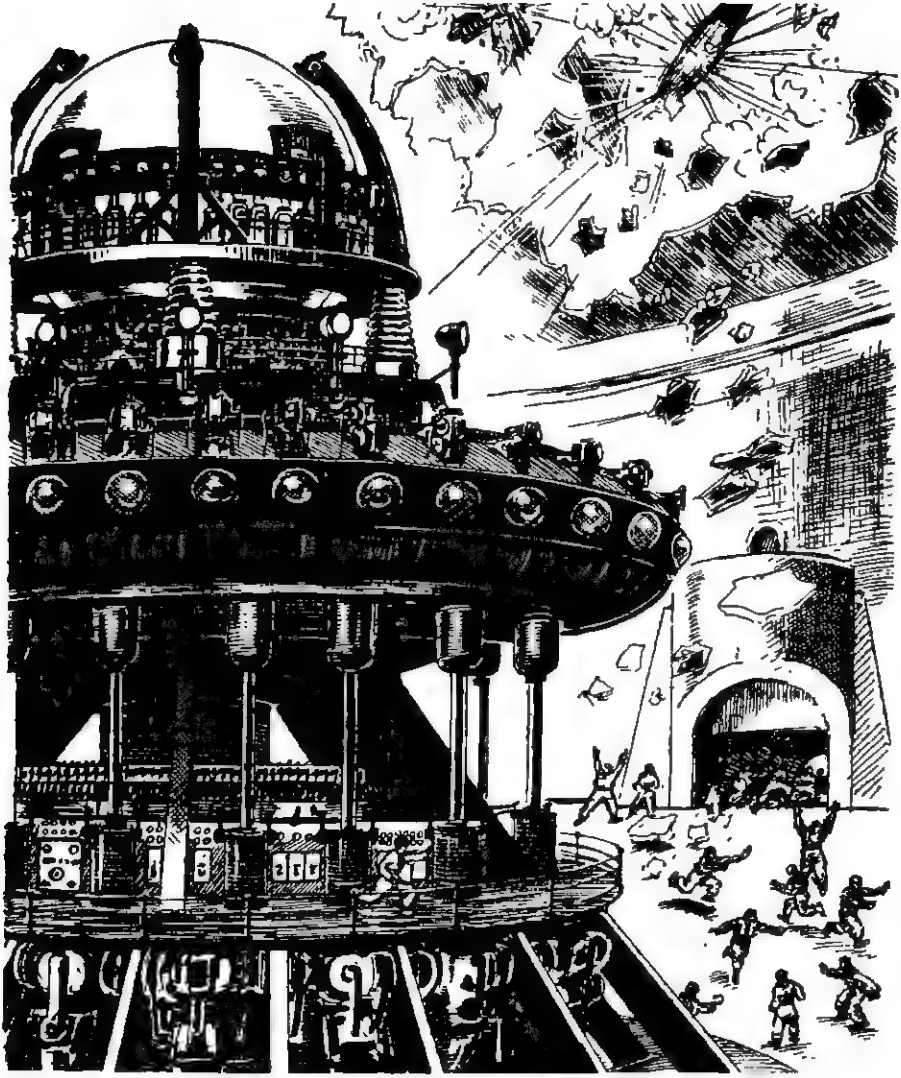
Winters looked about him and thought he noticed an unusual number of red and green figures around the archway into the corridor. Several of the supervisors were looking in his direction. It was now or never! With assumed carelessness he sauntered away in the direction of the indicated corner and as he plunged into the maze of people and furniture in that part of the hall noticed out of the tail of his eye several figures start forward from the doorway. His heart was beating like a trip-hammer as he came to the enormous glass ornament that filled the corner. He found room to squeeze behind it and once out of sight worked with feverish haste. The door opened readily and he raced across a small courtyard to the corner at the right. The bricks came away readily and he slit the lead covering of the cable with his knife. The transformer was unrecognizable as such to his eyes. It was a flat slab of spun wires and enormously complex in appearance, but the lead-in wires were easily identified and a clamp on each was quickly fastened to the cable.

And now Winters had nothing to do but sever the cable with the cutting tool that had been tied to the transformer. But his curiosity—that uppermost weakness of man—almost proved his undoing. In the center of the second door was set a small circular glass peep-hole. He *must* see the Brain in action! Heedless of possible watching eyes, he stepped cautiously over and peered within. Before him towered that miracle of the age—the mechanical brain! In his excited state it took merely a fraction of a second to impress the sight upon his mind. A hundred feet into the air rose the mass of wires and supporting girders—all lined with minute coils and banks of tiny wheels. It was a maze of intricacy from the floor up to the dome that formed the roof and extended out of sight on both sides. Grilled iron walks and ladders led in all directions so that the mechanics could reach every part.

SUDDENLY some sixth sense warned him that he had better complete his work. Back he raced to the cable and clamped the cutting tool hard over it and pulled. And then it struck him like a dull blow on the back of his neck—a great overpowering waves of *indecision.* The word does not properly describe the sensation, for this was indecision in its most terrible form—utter willessness; not a negative thing, but as it were inertia in a positive form.

He stood looking at the cutting-tool as it rested on the half-severed wire. Something inside him said: *Go ahead! Pull on it!* and there seemed to be no connection with this inner voice and his muscles. His arm was tiring of its position and, helpless, he saw his tool slip slowly away. Then as if by a miracle he suddenly regained his entire mental powers! What had happened? The last half-turn necessary to sever the wire had been supplied by his slipping hand.

The Brain was disconnected—dead! For a second he pondered leaving it that way and escaping—but reflected quickly that the fault would soon be found and mended. It was not such a simple matter for a man to outwit this giant thinking machine! He quickly removed the tool and replaced the loose bricks back tightly in place. He heard a sizzling going on in the transformer for a second and then a great wave of fear shot through him and his brain reeled. Some nameless dread thing hovered in the back of his mind and seemed to darken the very light in front of his eyes. His throat was dry and his limbs trembled. With a stifled cry he rushed forth from the courtyard and shut the door behind him trembling. Then he felt better as though he had shut the horror behind him. He traversed the tiny passage and slipped from behind the glass ornament



A great booming roar set the floor trembling. Three airships exploded over the city roof. The city was in bedlam. Over all rested that nameless horror of insanity.

(Illustration by Paul)

into the great glittering room full of people.

No one seemed to be looking for him, though his heart pounded guiltily. He sauntered with elaborate nonchalance toward the archway that led to the corridor and braced himself to show no emotion, for a dozen supervisors clustered there. He passed between them with the blood throbbing in his ears and for one wild second imagined he might escape. Then a hand fell on his shoulder!

"Winters! You are wanted in audience by the Brain!"

In sudden panic he fought to free himself and raced down the hall a dozen strides before his pursuers caught up with him. Unceremoniously he was bundled into a room off the corridor and a man in crimson stood in front of him accusingly.

"Search him!"

Rough hands tore his clothes and the cutting-tool was produced. The crimson man nodded grimly. He turned and pressed a button on the wall and spoke into a small hole that opened at his touch.

"An attempt to tamper with your Person, sire!"

The group waited stolidly for the sentence they knew would be pronounced. To their amazed ears a metallic voice vibrated in the wall these words:

"Running water! Pour running water and badly studious conundrums!"

The man in crimson started back in surprise and a line of worry appeared between his eyes. The voice continues:

"Cannot cannot departed airships megalomania. . . . crac-c-sk!"

THEN A SILENCE. With red swollen neck the Brain Mechanic turned on Winters wrathfully. "What is going on here! What has happened? Twist his arms, you there! Make him tell what he has . . ."

But he never finished. A great booming roar set the floor trembling and as they turned towards the door wonderingly a man burst into the room shouting: "Three airships exploded over the city roof and have wrecked the Temple top itself!"

With a cry the mechanic rushed away, the supervisors after him, and Winters made his way unmolested out of the room and down the corridor and into the street beyond. The city was in bedlam: Groups of men and women stood talking excitedly in the streets or raced with pale, set faces along the moving platforms on some secret purposes; here and there crimson-robed mechanics pushed determinedly through the crowds in the direction of the Temple and over all rested that nameless horror of insanity that permeated the entire city like the smell of burnt flesh.

A dread shadow of fear hung over everything like a hawk's wing. Men did strange things and thought strange thoughts and Winters looked on, wondering when the next step in the revolution would come and what form it would take. Presently he perceived resolute bands of men making their way to several points of vantage and near him one such band stopped and its leader addressed the citizens. Her voice shrilled out firm and persuasive.

"The Brain is insane! Shall we permit it to drive us all out of our senses? Can you not feel its mental forces wrestling with you? In another hour or two may we not commence killing each other—going violently mad?"

There was a movement of interest and a shudder of fear went through the assembly.

"The Brain must be silenced until it can be repaired—so only can we preserve our senses. But the men in crimson will not silence it, brothers! *They* have their protecting helmets—why should they care? But we cannot bear this another hour; some of us cannot support another minute—see! Seize that man quickly! He is out of control!"

Whether the incident was planned by the plotters Winters could not tell. A huge red-haired man had commenced beating his head against the stone wall of the building and when several hands stretched out to seize him he turned upon his would-be helpers and attacked them with breathtaking fury. Ten men jumped upon him and he subsided. The crowd was now thoroughly aroused, milling about and shouting.

"How much longer, brothers? Shall we wait quietly here until we go as that went?"

A great shout of "No!" rang out.

"Then if you want to save yourselves there is only one way! Seize any weapons you can find and follow me! We will silence the Brain!"

And away in a surging mob they swept, leaving the street bare. Winters followed some distance behind and saw them storm the great archway to the Temple. It was a pitiful sight, for a solid group of crimson-robed mechanics stood there and mowed them down with some form of firearm as they came up. A great pile of dead and dying was heaped yards high like a barrier. Even as he looked someone threw the first bomb. Its staccato explosion tossed fragments of limbs high into the air and some white smoke shrouded the arch for a minute. When it cleared Winters saw a great river humanity pouring through into the Temple. The Brain was doomed.

OF THAT LAST desperate defense of the Brain he learned a few details afterwards, but no par-

ticipant could remember very much. One by one the last of the crimson-robed figures were hunted down and a thousand improvised hammers beat and pounded among the delicate apparatus. When order was restored by organized patrols under the direction of the black-robed educators the entire Brain Temple was a hopeless wreck, with metal and glass mingling with the red of human blood and the white of torn flesh.

The entire air-establishment of the world had vanished, for the Brain in its final insanity had exploded every last airship and with each there died its pilot. The supervisors were either killed or forced to remove their distinguishing colors and many a one Winters saw making his way through the streets and passages clad only in torn underwear. By nightfall the revolution was an accomplished fact and in the pleasure palaces were enacted orgies beyond anything Winters had deemed human. He retired to his room in some disgust, but over and above this with a sense of great accomplishment.

He lay on his bed reflecting upon the day's work. Now, surely, the human race would be tired of false starts and be off along its path of progress. It would be a long path, of course, and his historian's soul sighed that he might be permitted to see the end—the result. But, after all, why should he not? Perhaps if he found the man in crimson and obtained his help in building a new sleeping chamber . . .

But these matters were taken out of his hands. When he awoke in the morning he was famous from one end of the world to the other. He was Norman Winters—the man who had set the Brain mad and freed the world from its dominance. Steuvlen (his man in crimson) and Clethra, who was his wife, (so far as these people had permanent marriages) came into his room and aroused him and with these two he was presented to the assembled council of educators. These proved to be kindly and intelligent men, most of them elderly, and Winters was offered any reward he might name that lay within their powers. He replied that he had a certain scientific experiment he was intent upon and asked whether he might have the assistance of Steuvlen and Clethra and such material as he needed.

"But have you no wish for position or rank?"

"None, sir."

So it was arranged presently that the three of them set forth in an airship—a very large one—loaded with many tons of lead and a store of equipment. It required much reiteration on the part of Winters to convince his companions of the truth of his story. What finally convinced them was the

sight, through a fluoroscope screen, of Winters' anatomy. There was unmistakably an organ no longer present in the bodies of modern human beings—an appendix. He told them of his former awakening 5000 years ago in the age of Tree-crops and how he had been sentenced to death as a representative of what they had then called "the age of waste"—the twentieth century. He wished his entire story kept absolutely secret, although both Steuvlen and Clethra assured him that now the world had succeeded in perfecting atomic power and synthetic food such economic questions had been long forgotten.

TOGETHER THE THREE commenced digging the tunnel with an amazingly adaptable digging machine—scarcely five feet high—which scooped out the dirt and sent it flying under the terrific impulse of its tiny atomic motor. When the work had proceeded some distance they erected a tent over the mouth of the hole and returned to the city to bring back four skilled mechanics blindfolded. Not until they were inside the tent were the bandages removed from their eyes and, willingly enough, they continued the construction at a rapid pace. In a week all was finished to the last detail and the men were again blindfolded and led out, into the airship and back to the city.

In the meantime Winters had prepared a strange book. The leaves were of sheet gold and hinged at the back. It contained two hundred pages and was very heavy but had the advantage of great permanence. On this he wrote with hydrochloric acid, using a glass stylus for a pen. Here follow some of the notations he set down:

1950 A.D.—a world based on private advantage and dependent upon natural foods entirely. Human nature still savage, but mentality very advanced.

3000 A.D.—approximate date of the great revolution which overthrew tribal government and private hoarding. From here dates the human race as a single unit speaking one language and with its chief aim the reduction of work hours required to maintain the people in comfort. From here dates a change from using plants and grains for food to the use of tree fruits and crops.

5000 A.D.—date of Winters' first awakening. He found a civilization whose chief political credo was economy and went on to observe future ages. This is described elsewhere.*

6500 A.D.—date of the first practical use of synthetic food. The country becomes deserted and cities multiply. Cities are no

*FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION #3, Summer 1967.

longer dependent on the country districts for supplies.

7000 A.D.— About this time came the discovery of atomic power and the first practical engines based upon this principle. An era of enormous prosperity and scientific advance.

7100 A.D.— The first expedition lands on Mars and returns, reporting it habitable but not nearly so pleasant as Earth. From here date several expeditions into space. Mars and Venus explored, mapped and several interesting forms of life brought back. No new or important minerals, except radium on Venus in vast quantities but so scattered as to be difficult to mine.

8000 A.D.— Professor Stannard demonstrates the mechanical brain. This was originally a machine with an electric scanning eye recording its observations on magnetic tape (principle of Poulsen's telegraphone of early twentieth century). Thought associations were produced by shape, color and general appearance and demonstrated by the machine on a numbered board. It caused much excitement and a dozen independent workers within two years had adapted the principle to the senses of sound, taste and feeling. The separate machines were brought together and a vocabulary set up on sound recording tape and about 8050 the mechanical brain existed as a thinking, speaking entity.

8200 A.D.— The mechanical brain now developed enormously and used to judge law cases and answer difficult questions.

8500 A.D.— The council of educators in control of the world and guided by the decisions of the Brain.

9000 A.D.— A revolt by the Educators to regain the power which the Brain had gradually taken over from them. The Brain and its defenders were prepared with deadly scientific weapons and the revolt was suppressed with great loss of life.

9500 A.D.— The last of several uprisings against the Brain. Suppressed with great loss of life and many people escape into the wilderness. From now on the course of history is stable. The Brain is constantly strengthening its position in the world and seeking to bring the last human beings in from the wilderness to avoid any possible uprising from without.

10,000 A.D.— The destruction of the Brain and the recommencement of the human race's efforts to improve its own mentality and physique. This is the date of Winters' second awakening.

AND NOW came the day that Winters had set for his departure—

his "burial" as Clethra sadly termed it. He made a last inspection of his chamber. It was fifty feet below the surface of the ground and lined with six feet of lead as before. But his clock was run by radium and a checking clock was set up run by the temperature difference between winter and summer. A great battery of X-ray and violet ray lamps lined the ceiling and were to be operated by an atomic motor, which ran continuously and would so run for five thousand years upon the power furnished by a pound of powdered calcium.

Above his couch was a glass container filled with a specially prepared liquid food and tonic. A synthetic rubber—imperishable—tube led from this down to the couch and would, when he went to sleep, be fastened to a mask over his mouth. Upon waking he would have merely to swallow, for the clock would automatically start the liquid running at the proper time—a few hours after the lights had been flashed on. Winters examined everything with great content and looked forward to his next awakening with impatience. He was getting on in years, he thought to himself, and this sort of thing could not continue indefinitely. It therefore behooved him to waste none of his lifespan yet remaining.

Nevertheless, it was with real regret that he said his farewells. The tent had long since been removed and the hole hidden cunningly with growing shrubs. The airship that was to take his companions back to the city stood close by ready for the flight.

"A good voyage to you," said Steuvlen. "Or should I perhaps say sweet dreams!"

"Good-bye! And you too, Clethra!"

"You are surely not sorry to see the last of me!"

"I am most certainly sorry. Why not?"

"Don't you remember how hard you tried to avoid me in the beginning?"

"How foolish I was!"

"There! You are forgiven. But I must kiss you once just to prove that no man can escape when a woman has decided to pursue him!"

He watched the airship rise into the sky, now darkening with the purple glow of sunset, and set off eastwards into the approaching nightfall. He stood a half hour gazing after it, thinking sadly of his lonely future. When he awoke these people would be dead and the very city they lived in, perhaps, a forgotten ruin. Might he not after all be happier to remain here? Then his thoughts went back still farther to his own age eight thousand years ago. Had he realized how irrevocable a thing time was, would he ever have started on this Odyssey through the milleniums? Once gone, time was forever gone—a memory—a nothing. He

(Turn to page 81)

.....Do Not Fold Or Mutilate.....

by WILLIAM M. DANNER

In time, a white card would take on a bluish tinge . .

HE SAT AT the window of his tiny room, looking down at the drab crowds many floors below on the windswept moving walks. He could not quite shake a guilty feeling at not being among them and on his way to work. But, without the all-important work-card, he could only wait and hope that the delay might mean good news.

"It's only a few blocks from The Center," he mumbled to himself for the thousandth time. "It shouldn't take more than a week to get here. It's been 26 days now. Mails must be screwed up again Damn!"

He tried again to read the book he had bought last year when he was working, but he couldn't keep his mind upon it. There was nothing else to keep him occupied in the cubicle, which was nothing more than a place to sleep. He couldn't even do that now, with his mind disturbed as it was.

WILLIAM M. DANNER is a veteran science fiction reader who is also an amateur publisher and model railroad enthusiast—to list but two of his various hobbies. His first-published story (professionally, that is), *Guarantee Period,* appeared in the June 1965 (#9) issue of *MAGAZINE OF HORROR,* when we were experimenting to see if the readers wanted occasional new science fiction tales with a touch of horror. The response was that the Danner story was very good, but they didn't feel that MOH should run this sort of story, as it could be found in the regular science fiction magazines; horror with a science fiction background should be confined to revivals of outstanding examples from long-gone sources. In the present story, the author deals with the struggle against encroaching and inept beaurocracy, which is the theme of a great deal of the content of his amateur journal, *STEFANTASY*— but with a difference.

He became alert as he heard the peculiar rumbling approach of the mail carrier. It stopped outside the next cubicle and then came on to stop at his. The mail slot opened and in tumbled the usual stack of MAM—Mandatory Answer Mail. He swore softly to himself as he stooped to pick it up.

"How'n hell am I gonna take care of all this junk?" he asked himself. "It's hardship enough to have to send in the forms pleading hardship and hoping I don't have to buy the trash anyway." He looked witheringly toward the broken plastic postal scale on the small chest of drawers in the corner, then his expression brightened as he came to the one thin, familiar envelope among the dozens of bulky MAM items.

"At last!" he breathed as he slit the envelope open. He reached in and withdrew the blue card it contained.

"Blue!" His guts tied themselves into knots and he weakly sat down on the bed. He stared at the card, but there was no mistaking the blueness of it or the punched holes so aptly suggesting a skull-and-crossbones.

He must go to The Center at once. Even if this were not compulsory for one who received a blue card he would have done so to get the misunderstanding straightened out. He looked at the postmark on the envelope: "Week of Dec. 18, 1998", and felt a little less leaden. "It *was* mailed in time," he muttered. "Just held up by the goddam mails. Almost four weeks to get here. All I have to do is show this postmark and explain . . ."

HE LOST no more time, but slipped into his jacket and went out to the elevator. Once in the street he got into the expressway to The Center. As he sped along, he wondered idly if it

were true that in the distant past these ways had been provided with a solid, hard surface upon which wheeled vehicles rolled. It didn't seem possible and the fact that the history books made no mention of these things was evidence that they were the product of an overactive imagination. Personally he had no use for such idiotic fancies, but looked forward to the time when he might be promoted to programmer at The Center and have a wife and family and a two-room — or even a three-room !— apartment at The Complex.

HIS REVERIE was broken as the expressway entered The Center and slipped of f to the unmoving floor. He had to wait only a minute or two for an elevator to the 141st floor, and in a few minutes more was at his destination. He had never been this high in the building before and he found himself one of a solidly-packed mass of humanity. It was *some* consolation, he thought, that so many others had complaints of one sort or another. He wondered where he should go and how he should get there in this mob and then, looking up, noticed the regularly-alternating frieze of colored bands around the walls just below the ceiling. Yellow, pink, tan, white, green, blue, was the sequence and then the same thing over and over. He wished this were all over with and that he had his customary white card again but, shrugging, made his way slowly toward a blue section.

At first it was just a matter of wriggling through a randomly-moving mass of people but presently, though it didn't look as though he had made much progress, he found himself in a line slowly moving toward one of the blue sections. There were hundreds of these lines radiating from the elevator shafts at the center of the vast room toward the four walls, but the crowd never seemed to diminish and he noticed that the cages were constantly disgorging new arrivals.

Finally he was second in line and he saw the man in front of him hold up a blue card like his to the vidicon. A small door slid open and an expressionless voice from a speaker next the vidicon said, "Enter, please." The man did so and the door silently slid shut again.

He had noticed people at the adjoining green and yellow sections carrying on conversations and even arguments with The Computer, and usually as a result receiving new cards or having some additional holes punched in the old ones before

passing through their doors. So it was with some confidence that he stepped up when it was his turn and held his card to the vidicon.

"My white card was delayed in the mail," he began, "delayed almost three weeks. See—here's the envelope; it came just this morning."

"But it's a blue card," was the unemotional response as the door slid open. "Enter, please."

"But there's been a mistake! It's supposed to be a white card!" In his abject fear he began to babble. "I've heard the white cards turn blue after three weeks. You *must* understand! It's a mistake, and . . ."

"Computers never make mistakes," was the reply. "Enter, please. You are holding up the line."

He looked to right and left, but the lines were separated by quite impenetrable barriers of steel and concrete. The line was pressing from the rear. There was nowhere else to go so slowly, reluctantly, he went through the doorway and the door closed behind him.

He was in a narrow passageway that led into a long, narrow aisle fed by all the other doors on that side of the central room. He had just noticed this fact and was looking for the exit when he, along with hundreds of others, was quickly and painlessly converted into energy to be stored in the accumulators in the cellars.

It took a great deal of energy to run The Center.

The Last Shrine

by CHESTER D. CUTHBERT

There was one way and only one way to reach Xenolie alive, but no man had done so.

HIGH IN THE Sierra Madre Mountains lies a cup-shaped valley which, together with its inhabitants, forms the basis of innumerable legends current among the people of the surrounding country. The valley itself is scarcely remarkable except for its inaccessibility; for it is of but moderate size, has never produced a commodity of value to the outer world, and has neither attracted nor repelled visitors.

To survive the test of time, any legend must have some modicum of truth as a foundation on which may be erected such fantasms of thought as may best serve their creator. Consequently, when definite data are unavailable, careful attention must be paid each such legend, that one may gain some impression of its subject.

It is said, for instance, that the people of the "Valley of Peace" are an eternal race. In the lands outlying the barren wastes that immediately border the valley are many Indian tribes claiming descent from the valley people, who emigrated, in bygone days, to colonize many lands. Inconceivably far back beyond the years covered by this legendry extends the life of the dwellers of the valley.

According to another legend,

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CHESTER D. CUTHBERT'S first story, *The Sublime Vigil*, appeared without fanfare in the February 1934 issue of *WONDER STORIES*. No one had ever heard of him before, but this story captured the imaginations and affections of the readers even up against the competition of one of the most popular serials of the 30's—*The Exile of the Skies*, by Richard Vaughn. Four months later, a second story appeared, *The Last Shrine;* its competition was the meteoric manifestation of Stanley G. Weinbaum, with his first tale, *A Martian Odyssey*—a story which was greeted with such overwhelming acclaim as to force the Editor to acknowledge later that he would have played it up far more had he realized how much of a hit it would be. Cuthbert's second and last story did not make the impact of his first, but we feel that you will agree it is a fine tale nonetheless—and we also feel that the readers at the time were over-touchy in their squeamishness about what they thought were the "weird" elements of the tale. If there was doubt in 1934 that this really could be considered science fiction, there should be no doubts today. And it is odd that readers who protested this highly reasoned theme were sometimes the same readers who loved A. Merritt's far more fantastic productions, yet did not quibble about whether *The Moon Pool* belonged in a science fiction magazine.

firmly rooted in the folklore of the region, no whisper of violence has ever threatened the peace enjoyed by this ancient race.

Yet the eternally peaceful impression created by these legends is vaguely shadowed by stories of the disappearance, from time to time, of prospectors and other lone wanderers last seen in the vicinity of the valley. Unexplained, these tales give rise to rumors of sacrificial orgies wherein the lives of such wanderers are given to forgotten gods. Apparently, none of the missing have possessed affiliations with any in the outside world and the disappearances are spread over two or three centuries of time, so that the rumors are not sufficiently convincing to warrant investigating expeditions.

Whispers of the "Valley of Peace" were quietly insinuated into my conversations with various people soon after my arrival in the little coast village. Tired of the futility expressed by the continual warfare of Chinese warlords, I had recently quitted the Orient, a place made none too safe for me in 193— by bitter misrepresentations of certain of my activities. Even now, perhaps, the name of Dan Armour may cause a curious quickening of interest, long dormant, in stories left current by my sudden disappearance.

However that may be, there was nothing mysterious in my choice of Mexico as the land of my immediate future. I was drawn by visions of the lazy somnolence of the Central American country. The whispers caused me to search out

carefully all the legends of the strange little valley, and these formed a picture so intriguing that I could not resist its allure. The mystery of the disappearances served only to whet my desire, for to me it seemed quite likely that the missing wanderers had chosen to remain in the valley rather than to leave a spot so peaceful—and I, too, longed for peace.

A long, difficult trek across the rugged wastelands encircling the valley brought me at last to its rim. Utterly weary after the arduous trip, I camped in a sheltered spot, rested for a week, and studied, through field glasses, the native village which nestled on the valley floor about two miles away. I was glad I had managed to bring all I would need for an extended stay, for thoughts of the return trip over the hot sand and rocks held no attraction.

The people below were well developed physically, but they seemed oddly lethargic, moving slowly about the village at their tasks. Seldom there floated up the sound of a shout made faint by distance; and even when a hunting party returned from foraging, no great enthusiasm was apparent in the welcome extended by the rest of the tribe. Only on the seventh day was there any change: I noticed signs of unusual activity, as though preparations for some important event were proceeding.

I WAS watching the kindling of a number of fires when a touch on my arm startled me. Springing erect, I saw that a half-dozen natives had approached. They did not seem at all hostile, nor did they appear surprised or displeased at finding me; they merely accepted my presence as a matter of course. By signs, they indicated that I was to accompany them to the village.

With what dignity I could assume, I accepted their invitation. Carrying my pack, we set out. The trail at times precluded sight of the village, but upon our arrival, I saw that an image had been erected near each of the fires. Around these the villagers were dancing. As we drew closer, I observed that the dance was religious in its significance, for it was accompanied by measured music from rude instruments and the dance steps appeared to follow a rigidly prescribed formula.

Ceremony was utterly lacking in the welcome accorded me by the tribal chieftain, who motioned that I was to witness the dance. So casual a reception was bewildering, but I soon forgot this sensation in my interest in the scene.

The fires evidently represented the sun for both its light—and

heat-giving qualities. The dancers slowly encircled each in turn first attending, ironically, the least important of the idols, then that next in importance, and so on. I was surprised to note that the smallest post was carved to represent a fish. For what conception could this tribe have of the huge fish-creatures that roam the seas? A ram, a goat, a bull, an ape, and many other creatures were caricatured. An octopus spread its tentacles near the emblem of a tree. Combinations of these idols formed connecting links from one to another, and all looked grotesque in the firelight. Last of all, a serpent-god looked with eyes of ancient wisdom down upon the indifferent dancers.

The ceremony was not performed with the fervor usually attendant upon such occasions. Finally I grasped the amazing fact that indifference to the significance of the ceremony constituted its chief value. The keynote of the ritual was mockery — mockery of each and all of the things represented! This indifference must have been built up through generations upon generations of mock-worship. But why?

THAT QUESTION was but one of many which gave me food for thought during the ensuing month. After the ceremony, the tribe settled into its wonted existence and nothing of consequence occurred. I often wondered what objective these people could have, for they lived on from day to day, purposeless, calm, neither rising to ecstasies of delight nor descending to depths of despair in any way. They lived as though they had all eternity in which to work out their destiny.

With nothing else to do, I rapidly learned their language which, to my further mystification, I found to be far older than any other tongue I had ever heard.

While camped upon the valley's rim, I had often wondered at the leisurely actions of the natives. They had seemed never to hurry. Yet one day I was astonished to discover that this impression had faded, for I found their motions quite as swift as my own.

At the end of the month, I noticed a subtle change in the manner in which I was regarded by those natives with whom I came in contact. It was as though they had been awaiting some eventuality all this time, and, failing its occurrence, were bent on pursuing some predetermined course. Now I understood certain veiled inquiries the chief had made as to my connections with the outer world, to which I had answered that I was quite alone. And even though I now realized this to be the reply for which he had hoped, I was not sorry I had told him. Possibly

something would occur to give me a clue to the mystery of these strange people. There was nothing sinister or menacing about them and, perhaps because of my intimacy with their strange purposelessness, I was possessed of a curious fatalism; I cared not for what might happen.

I was not surprised when preparations were made for a two days' journey. Early one sunny morning, a small party, including the chief and myself, set out toward the far end of the valley. After about nine hours of travel, we came to a waterfall. As we approached it, the Indians became even quieter than usual. An oblong cavity in the stone wall near the cascade engaged their attention and, dropping their packs, they accorded it a most respectful obeisance. Following this ceremony, which was imbued with a profound reverence utterly foreign to their attitude toward the images in the village, the natives led the way through the waterfall, entering a passageway behind it.

My first glance informed me that the passageway had been worn smooth along its floor and walls by the constant passage of people. In countless years, their bodies had almost totally obliterated certain carvings on the walls. Such pictographs as had escaped this steady erasure seemed to have been wantonly destroyed. My curiosity was tantalized by glimpses of strange portrayals of beings unlike any I had ever seen before, but my companions paid them no attention, pressing onward at a leisurely but steady pace. We stopped for sleep in an enlarged portion of the passageway, which, I was told, marked the completion of half our journey.

AS WE progressed the following day, I found it was growing slightly difficult to breathe. There was but little circulation of air in the passage and our journey must have brought us almost to sea level, but even this did not explain the slight oppression of the atmoshpere. And now I remembered a sensation similarly experienced when I had first descended into the valley from its rim.

Miles on miles stretched the passageway, and my brain reeled at thought of the prodigious labor which must have been necessary to complete it. I was growing weary when we came to our destination.

This was a huge cavern. Its roof, like an inverted bowl, sheltered the floor from a height of at least a quarter of a mile. The passageway ended thirty feet or so above the cavern's lowest level. Entering this huge cavity was like approaching the interior of a gi-

gantic ball through a downward-slanting tube. Curiously, although the near wall curved away to indicate that the opposite wall could not be far distant, it could not be seen. It was as though an invisible curtain were hung before the eyes, shielding the far wall from view.

I was guided along the ledge of rock to an aperture in the wall a short distance from the mouth of the tunnel. This cavelike entrance now proved to be the doorway to a miniature reproduction of the cavern, though it gave an impression of much more recent construction. In its center was a high pedestal, holding a figure that caused me to gasp involuntarily.

This was the image of a beautiful woman — girl, rather, I concluded. Of material so fashioned as to shine in the subdued light emanating from the outer cavern, it seemed a reincarnation of some ancient goddess of youth and beauty. Each feature of the beautiful face, each line of the sublime figure, each fold of the enshrouding garment, were so lifelike that I at first thought her alive. She stood in an attitude of resigned calm and, gazing at her, I understood at last the quiescence of the Indians, for she seemed to command a calm acceptance of whatever might portend.

Portals branched off from this temple and through them appeared men robed like priests. These made welcome the chief and his companions and examined me as though I were an inanimate object destined to fulfill some purpose of theirs. They seemed pleased to note that I was well over six feet in height and looked strong in proportion.

Only one of the priests — he whose nobility of countenance denoted him the High Priest — gave any indication of personal interest.

"Welcome, my son," he said quietly, with a smile, and I was conscious of a warm regard which lightened the tedium of solitary confinement in a small cave, under guard.

2

MY WATCH had been broken in our journey through the passageway and since day and night were without significance in this subterranean place, I had no means of measuring the passing hours. As nearly as I could judge, it was during the morning of the third day after my arrival that I was called for by a group of priests and conducted again into the the temple. There all the people were gathered, looking tensely expectant. A rising tide of excitement possessed them. Different from anything I had seen in them before was their rapt anticipation.

I was guided to a niche in the

temple wall, through a slit in which I could see the outer cavern. Like positions were taken by all present, some ranging themselves along the ledge of rock.

At first I could see nothing but the stone steps which led from the ledge to the floor of the cavern. Then I saw what all had been awaiting—a man who seemed to walk out of the wall below me and down the flight of steps. He never swerved in his purposeful progress, never looked to right or left, up or down, but kept his eyes steadfastly upon something in the center of the cavern which was utterly invisible to me.

Amid a tense, palpitant, silence, the man paused on the bottom step as though he had encountered a barrier. He shuddered, as with uncontrollable dread, then leaned forward in an attempt to penetrate the obstruction. He stretched forth a hand and it seemed slowly to disappear! I looked away for a moment to blink my eyes clear of the haze which I thought must have momentarily obscured my vision. A second look convinced me that the hand had disappeared entirely.

A general sharp intake of breath answered the sob of despair that came to our ears. But instead of turning back from the invisible barrier, the man still endeavored to thrust his way forward, though he did not move from his tracks!

As he strove, the priests began a chant. It seemed to invoke the pity and mercy of some deity, begging that the man be allowed to penetrate the curtain to worship. Yet the chant prayed more for the sake of the people than for the man. It asked a gateway to near worship of the deity through the strife and suffering of such as he who now strove at the barrier!

Suddenly I noticed that his head had half-disappeared in the invisible veil. His struggles ceased abruptly. He appeared to be falling headlong into the haze. Yet his fall was so slow that I wondered if something were supporting him, allowing him to fall forward only by scarcely perceptible degrees.

A great sob came from the worshipers. Five or six of the priests emerged onto the rock-shelf and descended the steps, walking cautiously in the man's direction. They grasped his inert legs and pulled him slowly from the curtain. It was like extricating a man from quicksand: they could not draw him out swiftly without stretching or severing his head and arms; they had to draw him gradually toward them. I was conscious of the hair rising stiffly on the nape of my neck as, with nerves eerily tensed, I watched the head drawn out, lolling inertly, then the arms, inch by inch, then the hands.

Long-drawn sighs arose when the extrication had been accomplished and the priests had hastily carried their burden into the temple. Turning from our niches, we faced the pedestal on which the statue reigned. Before her, below the level of her perfectly formed bare feet, they laid the inanimate figure on an altar.

ALL KNELT. The High Priest intoned an introductory chant, his words punctuated by deep bell-notes of a gong.

"O Xenolie! Flower of Eternal Paradise! Goddess of Youth! Golden Immortal! Unapproachable! Last Gift of the Gods! Incomparable One! Hear us!"

And, "Hear us!" echoed the worshipers!

"Harken once again to the prayer that has been offered through the years by countless generations of worshipers! Give your gracious understanding to our supplication! Smile upon your children! Have compassion for the dying remnants of a once great race! Come to us!"

And again the worshipers echoed, "Come to us, Xenolie!"

The High Priest paused. Silently he stood with closed eyes as though summoning the story from recesses of memory, then:

"Cast back your thoughts through the eons, O Xenolie! Dream of when mankind was young! Turn back the leaves of memory and give me inspiration to tell of them once again! Remember—and pity us!"

The kneeling throng began to hum in a curious, low monotone, vague and shadowy in sound as the beginning of all things.

"Life here began when our earliest ancestors sought the trees as their homes to prolong their lives, when the first hideous monsters of the era of horror roamed the Earth and filled the lives of men with danger, when those who could not find trees enough for homes searched out the mountain fastnesses to protect themselves. Then it was that our forebears found the Word. And Huantal, the Inspired, interpreted the Word and started the work that is to bring to mankind the Kingdom of the Earth. For is it not written that through the toil of early ages you shall be revealed to us, Xenolie?

"After Huantal had pointed out the way for the sons of the Chosen, successive generations pecked and quarried at the passageway to your Shrine; each king in turn guided his people's labor, and carved on the walls the story of the work during his reign. The history remained for the good of future generations until the wicked king, Questal, ordered its obliteration. But even his evil memory

was not sufficient to drive from the minds of your people the object of the work, O Golden Immortal!

"When the tunnel was complete, what rejoicing there was among your people! What worship at your Shrine! And when those who had solved the Secret first saw you, what joy was then! But you slept so long that your people strayed from the path of righteousness. Then it was that the sons of men went out into the world and stayed — stayed so long that many forgot their ancestry.

"In those days, the Earth was troubled. It trembled and was sore, for its very life was altered by the Gods, filled with anger at those who had deserted you. Many races of mankind were lost when great continents sank beneath the waves and rocky mountain ranges reared themselves to rival those forming the home of your people. Incomparable One. It was then that you were seen to rise from your couch and watch over your people!

"BUT MESSENGERS, sent out into the world to gather all peoples to see you in awakened majesty, found that great oceans had barred the errant ones from ever returning. Even that awful warning did not stay the emigration of the race, for they peopled the two continents which your Shrine divides. Those who settled nearest your Shrine became the highest civilizations on the two continents, but they worshiped upstart gods who were unable to prevent the wrath of the true Gods from crumbling their civilizations to dust! Then, in great ships, came men from far lands who crushed the peoples who had so lately forsaken you.

"At last, only those faithful ones were left who worshiped you and stayed near your Shrine to keep burning the flame of worship for the old Gods. And now only their children, faithful still, but ah! how few, still live; and those are we, Xenolie!

"So save us! Listen to our prayer! Come to us! Let the sunshine of your presence brighten life for the few remaining years of our dying race! Appear in your natural form from out the shades of your Shrine and comfort us with the music of your voice! Let your words of age-old wisdom show us that you still love us!"

The voice of the old priest trembled, was silent. A long-pent sigh of longing rose from the kneeling throng.

"Today was sacrificed in your name a youth from the outer world, O Flower of Eternal Paradise," the priest intoned, recovering his voice. "For is it not written that one shall come from the world's highest race, who shall be

the means to bring you to us? And is it not written that you shall be willing to become as a mortal for the sake of your children? But the time is not yet, for the youth is dead. May his spirit rest forever in peace, as must the souls of all who look upon you and believe!"

He lifted his voice in a chant that was strengthened by the voices of the worshipers. Two priests lifted the body down from the altar and carried it away through one of the portals.

A steadfast light, emanating from the great cavern, kept darkness in abeyance always. Only in the passageways inside the temple were torches necessary, and these, ever burning, cast flickering shadows over the silent people.

I WAS LED, wondering, back to my room. Had this tribe existed such untold ages? The mere thought of the countless years staggered my imagination. Could it be that this valley was the source of many world nations, that it had produced men who had, in turn, made possible great civilizations?

Greatly, too, did I wonder at the ceremony I had just witnessed. Was the statue before which all had knelt, an image of their Goddess who, from their prayer, must be supposed to dwell in the seeming void of the great cavern? They seemed to look upon her as the emblem of eternal youth; but if this were so, she must be a true Immortal, for none other could have existed so long.

Thinking of the beautiful image and wondering dreamily of what had been said about a youth coming from the outer world, I fell asleep.

The next day the High Priest came to me.

"My son," he said, with the sad expression that never entirely left his face, "yesterday you witnessed the death of one of your own race. Yet, in spite of what you saw, I swear that he died voluntarily, happily. It is to be your provilege to emulate him if you are no more fortunate than he in penetrating the Veil."

I said nothing. Countless questions came to mind, but I could not voice them, vague and formless as they were.

"You have heard the story of tribe," the priest went on, "and from it you can judge if we would be so ignoble as to sentence you to any meaningless death. On the contrary, you will have a chance for a life far greater than any man before you has known. It is a gamble. Either you will receive this glorious life as reward or you will die as did the youth."

Awaiting no reply, he turned away.

Later, a curious slumber overwhelmed me. Without warning, my eyelids dropped and I fell asleep as I say. Yet, though the stupor was so deep that I heard and felt nothing, I had a sensation of being led down an inner flight of steps to a little cell near the foot of the basin which housed the Unknown.

When I awoke, I was powerless to move. Strive as I did, I could not command my muscles to function. It was as though I were imbedded in cement, each nerve and muscle paralyzed into something akin to stone. And, too, my eyes were fixed rigidly on a spot, hazy, nebulous, in the midst of the Veil.

For a long time I saw nothing. Yet I had a strange impression that sight of something was slowly coming to me. It seemed that my eyes, in their fixed rigidity, were now capable of seeing things quite invisible to them in ordinary circumstances. Soon I became certain that, if I looked long enough, I would see something oddly familiar—something precious as the breath of life!

After many hours of strained watching, the outlines of a shadowy figure appeared in the midst of the void. It could not have been more than seventy yards from me and it soon became distinct, as if I were gazing through crystal-clear air for that distance. The entire picture was bathed in brilliant light so mirrored from one surface to another as to make all objects stand out distinctly, without casting shadows.

FOR A bewildered moment, I thought that I was gazing at the statue; that through obscure arts, my fixed gaze had been diverted through some mysterious medium into the center of the temple itself. Then I saw that such an impression was wholly wrong, for behind the Goddess on this pedestal was a couch heaped with cushioned covers so strange as to make me wonder if I were actually seeing them. On either side of her was a vase enscrolled with curious hieroglyphics.

The beauty of the statue in the temple had been breathtaking in its power to arouse a depth of emotion utterly foreign to me before my sight of it. But infinitely more beautiful was the idol at which I was now staring, for this image seemed endowed with life—life so vital, so overwhelmingly sweet, as to create in my heart desire that life might be eternal, that my eyes might never fail me, and that my lot might be ever to see this radiant vision.

I thought she was young—certainly not more than twenty years had passed in her life. And the thought was sweet! Golden hair

enshrouded her lissom figure to her feet and framed a face so hauntingly beautiful as to cause my heart to contract with exquisite pain, much as would a poignant melody played by a master musician. Her eyes, I thought, though the distance made actual sight impossible, were of that deep, dark blue that makes one think of the blue of the sky in the dying moments of a glorious sunset viewed from a valley already in shadow Her hands and feet were small, almost fragile in their delicate symmetry. Her figure combined the grace of a gazelle with the ethereal beauty of a bird of golden plumage. And this—this was Xenolie!

The Goddess was not standing erect as was her image in the temple; she was bending as though to set upright one of the vases which was slowly toppling. Slowly there grew on her lovely face the expression of an emotion that could have been nothing but apprehension for the consequences of her act in upsetting it. Fascinated, I watched for hours as the vase fell and the hand of Xenolie slowly followed its downward passage.

Yet only subconsciously did I note the significance of her action. I was too deeply absorbed in contemplation of the enchanting vision she presented. Forgotten were eyestrain and weariness, forgotten all the world. Caressingly, worshipfully, rapturously intent, I watched—watched until the sudden slumber came again—until the vision faded in the flash of intense pain the act of closing my eyes occasioned.

3

WHEN I awoke, I was in my old cell in the temple. The High Priest was bending over me, concern and sadness in his glance. Even the eagerness that flamed unconcealed in my eyes seemed to cause him pain.

"My son," he said, slowly, "you have seen. Do you wonder now that I told you the youth died happily?"

"I do not understand," I returned. "He must have seen what I saw; yet, what connection can there be between the vision and his death?"

"Only this," explained the old priest. "The Veil presents to us an invisible barrier. What this barrier is, we have never been able to discover. It seem penetrable, but once any vital bodily organ has entered, sure death ensues. Our old legends and the Word of the Gods foretell that the barrier shall be penetrated, as I have said, by a youth from the outer world. And, at the appointed time, the will of the Gods must be served!

"When that day comes, Xenolie shall come—a mortal—to her

people. And she shall die even as we.

"The Word, which is the source of our higher knowledge, has given us the ritual to be observed when an attempt is to be made to enter the Veil: the youth is placed in a hypnotic state which induces a condition of paralysis in all bodily organs except eyes and brain. He is then placed in such a position that, if he is devout and keeps faithful vigil for sight of her, he will see the Goddess. If pleased, she will converse with him. When he feels that he can penetrate the Veil, he is freed and allowed to make the attempt. The youth was but one of many who have tried; but he failed, as did they."

"You have often mentioned the 'Word,'" I observed. "I understand that it must be your Book of Religion, but what is its origin?"

"The Word was found when our ancestors came to the valley. Our first king discovered it in a wondrous crystal case on the rock wall by the waterfall. For centuries none could decipher it, but at last, our wisest king, Huantal, interpreted the Holy Parchment. It told of how the Gods who set the Book in the valley had placed, in a cavern far under the valley floor, a Goddess who would live through all the ages the tribe could endure. It gave instructions for finding the Shrine and promised that the Goddess would permit herself to be seen by her true worshipers through their faithful vigil. Huantal read the prophecy of the coming of a youth from the outer world—signal that the time would have come when the people, as guardians of her Shrine throughout the ages, would have merited a great boon. As an emblem of the God's pleasure with the way in which their Word would have been fulfilled, Xenolie would come, a mortal even as they, to her worshipers.

"Huantal started the work of the passageway, and it was completed ages after the Gods raised him to their Place. Mark of the approval of the Gods for completion of it was the gift of longevity for our race; formerly we averaged fifty years of life—now we look forward to at least ninety years before Death claims us. All through the centuries we have guarded the Shrine. Of the family of High Priests of which I am the last, never has the oldest son forsaken the valley. But the prophecy must be fulfilled before I die, for I have no son!"

AN AGONY of sadness revealed in his tone, he turned sorrowfully away; and now I understood his grief.

All that day I lay on the rude couch, recuperating from the ordeal of the paralysis. Fitful day-

dreams constantly recurred, most of them pleasant, but some arousing an uncertain feeling of chill horror. Finally I fell asleep, only to dream a distorted version of the situation in the valley.

Once again I seemed to find myself in a niche in the temple, gazing at the statue of the Goddess. As I looked, there appeared in her hands a manuscript bound, book-like, between stiff covers of some unknown material. Of its own volition, seemingly, the book opened; and from it came writhing mighty tentacles. Fascinatedly I watched those snake-like appendages and followed them back to their source, only to discover that the book had transformed itself into the body of an octopus. Slowly the monster grew larger before my eyes until tthe statue of Xenolie was hidden deep within the black shadow it cast and the dark shape dominated the room from its position on the pedestal.

The niche from which I viewed the scene receded to a distance. The temple itself expanded; its walls grew transparent, hazy. The tentacles of the octopus reached through the walls, stretched interminably until they reached the floor of the valley far above. Each of them grasped a priest. Immediately, new tentacles sprouted from each priest's body and stretched forth to gather Indians. This process went on until every member of the tribe was controlled by the octopus in the temple.

I had the impression of the passing of many, many years. The Indians went about their tasks unconcernedly, quite as though they were unconscious of the relentless grasp in which they were held. At intervals, however, a number of the Indians converged into a group. Then only did they seem to sense the control being exercised over them; and they struggled in revolt. When this happened an entire branch of the maze-like tentacles suddenly broke, loosing a large number of Indians from their captivity. These ran to the edge of the valley and disappeared over its rim. Only a lonely tentacle followed them; sometimes it returned to the master-body; sometimes it withered and died. Those that returned were transformed by the priests into the objects which became the images in the village around which the villagers danced. These images were always reviled; genuine obeisance was made only to the shape in the temple.

IN TIME, the Indians who arose in revolt became fewer and fewer; a lethargy possessed them all. With none to struggle against them, the tentacles relaxed, became soft and velvety; but still they drew. Finally they became mere

hazy threads. I looked toward the monster on the pedestal. It was now only a shadow; and even as I watched, it grew lighter. Behind it, a light began to glow. Brighter and brighter it beamed, until its radiance dispersed entirely the haze that the octopus had become. Soon the brilliance assumed the form of the statue of Xenolie. But the book was hidden — perhaps within the statue.

I looked for the Indians, who were wandering aimlessly about, seldom venturing so far as the valley's rim. A few of them gathered about the statue; others congregated in the village. I was shaken by a great surge of pity for them; their inarticulate sadness wrought within me an answering emotion of deep sympathy. They seemed so much like lost children — living in a peaceful world of their own, indifferent to all the tremendous things I dimly saw taking place at a distance all about them, secure in their faith, fated only to survive so long as their Goddess remained immortal, doomed to extinction when she answered their prayer for her coming — to release them.

I awoke with a sensation of unutterable sorrow. For a long time I lay thinking of the dream, comparing it with what I knew to be true of the valley. The whole panorama seemed to typify the eternal strife of man after an ideal — an ideal futile since it could be but mortal even in its entirety, yet full of hope, of joy, of pain, of despair, of all the emotions that mortals will ever feel — an answer to some nebulous thought of the Creator.

With the conviction that my dream presented a key to the riddle of the valley, I fell asleep, possessed by a sense of the coming of an inevitable, profound peace.

SOON AFTER I awoke, the old priest visited me.

"My son," he said, "you must try to speak with the Goddess when next you see her. Do your best to tell her of us; you are the medium through whom we can hope that she will come to us at last. All before you have failed. Many have said that they spoke with Xenolie, but they lied; and when we permitted them to try to go to her, they died for their lies."

"But she is too far away to hear what I say," I objected. "And even if she were near, I could not speak, for my lips are paralyzed. I cannot move a single muscle."

"It is not with the tongue that you must speak. Forget that you have a tongue! Only thoughts can Xenolie hear; you must pray her to listen. Speech is man made; do you expect the Gods to descend to such crude means of communication? Do not think your thoughts in

mere words; think your emotions until you can learn to express them in thought-pictures. It is much like this: ordinarily you would think in the words of your mother tongue. Instead, you must elevate your thoughts to a higher plane and send forth perfectly formed pictures much as you would utter words with your tongue and lips. Do you understand?"

"I think I do," I answered slowly. "But I am a man of action — not of thought. How can I best do as you say?"

"The Word says, 'Before you act, you must think, if only subconsciously. Instead of thinking for the purpose of physical action, form your thoughts for the sole purpose of building up an action of thought. *Think* your way into the consciousness of the Goddess; make her understand your presence.

When the priest had gone, I spent a long time in readjusting my conceptions of thought. There was wisdom in his words, and since he had recieved his knowledge from the Word which was so closely connected with everything concerning the Goddess, I determined to put the theory into practice. The idea of possessing the power to project my thoughts into the consciousness of the Goddess was as the prospect of clear, sparkling water to a man dying of thirst in the desert.

The slumber-sensation came again that night. Again I sat and watched for the moment in which sight of the Goddess would come to me. But this time I did not wait until I could see her before beginning thought of her. Instead, I willed with all my heart that she visualize me as I sat watching.

And my thoughts were answered! She was looking toward me with a slowly dawning expression of comprehension on her face. My thoughts began leaping wildly from one thing to another until I noticed that her expression was altering to one of bewilderment. Then I realized that I must think very slowly and give her time to understand each thought before proceeding to the next.

I was so excited that my mind became blank for a moment with the wonder of the thing. In that moment, I clearly received the impression that I was being asked to detail my surroundings a little more distinctly. This could be nothing but a message from Xenolie, and my emotion almost broke the bonds of the paralysis. I did my best to explain the little cell-like niche in the wall of the cavern from which I viewed the Veil. A little later I noticed that her eyes were fixed in my direction. Finally I could tell from her expression that she had glimpsed me.

At once I sent another message,

asking her—of all things—how old she was! Her attempted explanation was utterly beyond my comprehension, and she was still trying to make it clear to me when my eyelids closed again.

WHEN I awoke, two weeks had passed as measured by the old priest's candles, I felt very weak and was amazed at thought of how much energy my eyes and brain had required. I told the old priest of what had happened, and he called all the people to hear what I had to say. The priest looked upon me almost with reverence, and the people regarded me with an awed wonder equal to that which I felt when I thought of the ages their race had endured.

Intermittently during some weeks I held communion with the Goddess. As the days progressed, I noticed that the conversations required less and less time until it took only a few minutes for a transfer of thought-messages between us.

The people of the valley, too, had changed. It was quite the usual thing to see a number of them gazing reverentially toward that place in the Veil where Xenolie was. As a shock to me came the revelation that they were growing weaker physically. Almost as I watched them, they seemd to age. Longer and longer became the vigils they undertook at the Shrine; longer and longer grew the periods of worship held in the little temple.

The old priest came to me one day.

"My son," he addressed me, as always, "you must ask Xenolie to come to us very soon. Have you noticed that the number of the people is growing less? Yes.," at my startled look, "many are dying. The Word is not very clear on the point, but it does say that the days of the people are numbered when they have called upon Xenolie to come to them. I do not think that they care, though. They are joyful at thought that they, of all the people of all the ages, are to be those favored to see Xenolie assume mortal shape and walk among them. Perhaps the wisdom of the outer world will enable you to understand why this should be. Should it do so, say nothing. But you must—you *must* entreat Xenolie to come!"

I gulped back a lump in my throat, for I was almost overwhelmed with sorrow and I knew that Death would not be satisfied with a few.

"I will speak with Xenolie again," I promised, " and tell her of the longing of her people. And I think that she will come."

What I had learned in the valley and from the Goddess made me

feel the time had come when preparations should be made for Xenolie to leave the Shrine. A combination of the jumbled threads of information presented a solution to the mystery of the Shrine.

4

XENOLIE IS one of a great race which lived on Earth untold eons in the past. This people built up a magnificent civilization controlling all the inhabitable parts of the world. Many centuries before Xenolie was born, her people had passed through that degree of civilization which requires above all, mastery of physical laws; they had built great cities, had invented marvelous instruments and machines, and had achieved a highly complex social system. In Xenolie's time, however, her people realized that all this complexity of structure was nothing but a burden: its very efficiency made life increasingly a routine affair which left no time for accomplishments that really advance a race. A great leader arose to show them how to create, in place of this mechanical existence, a higher and finer type of life founded upon understanding of certain mental powers. Soon their mental science enabled them to understand one another without recourse to speech, though they retained an oral and a written language. They developed the fine arts almost to that perfection which was their goal in all things. Combined with their knowledge of physical laws, their mastery of purely mental phenomena enabled them so to stimulate artificially the processes of nature as to control the production of many things whose production by nature is yet a mystery to our present civilization.

At that period in the unfolding of the universe, the matter composing Earth and all upon it existed at a much slower time-rate that that at which it now exists—or it may be more true to the facts of time to say that matter *appeared* so to exist. For all matter on Earth has its existence at a time-rate consistent with its purpose in being; and time, to an intelligent being, is merely that quality which gives him his perspective of events occurring all about him. This being so, the perspective of Xenolie's race is all that need concern us. To her people day and night appeared not to exist separately; they so merged as to make the world seem enshrouded in a continual half-light, a sort of perpetual dusk. Its periods regulated in proportion to the normal intervals intervening between eating and sleeping—their slower life-rate limiting them in that her people had but little knowledge of astronomy—a mechanical chronometer

measured their conception of the passing of time quite as well as our clocks measure time for us in relation to day and night and such other cyclic events as appear in our perspective.

Into the midst of their peaceful, happy existence were injected the sorrow and unrest occasioned by prospect of a frightful change. For some time, the usual gray of the skies had been lightened by a rosy radiance. A scientist who had been studying the cause of this phenomenon explained that it foretold the approach of a gaseous nebula, of negligible mass but of enormous extent. It was coming very slowly, but Earth would soon be engulfed in the space wanderer; and the peculiar quality of the gas composing the nebula would entirely change the planet.

AS AN introduction to the presentation of his theory, the man of science reminded the people that the Earth with its atmosphere—and, indeed, all space and all matter—is inherently pervaded by the luminiferous ether. His theory postulated the luminiferous ether to be that medium which, in its eternal flow throughout infinity, controls the occurrence of events and is, therefore, the basis of time. Then he predicted that the gas of the nebula would so react upon that portion of the luminiferous ether permeating and surrounding any matter in the path of the nebula, as to accelerate the existence-rate of that matter and alter the life-current of its fundamental structure. The physical structure of matter would remain unaltered, but the time-element—or, to give it its proper name, the luminiferous ether—in and of which that matter had its existence, would be revitalized, and consequently accelerated in its flow. All forms of life would not be exterminated immediately, but the change from the slow rate to one incalculably faster would so weaken the life-energy of matter as to shorten life, even in proportion to the faster rate at which it must be lived.

Applying this prospect to their lives, the scientist indicated that their wonderful civilization was doomed, for no substance, however soundly constructed, could resist the insidious quickening of its life-rate. Once matter had an opportunity to adjust itself to the new condition, rehabilitation would inevitably come. His speech left no room for doubt that he despaired of their race living through the impending chaos.

Faced with this dilemma, the people revealed the morale their near-Utopian civilization had instilled. Instead of giving way to

blind panic, they accepted, with that enlightened fortitude which surpasses mere resignation, the grim prospect of annihilation. But they did not despair of leaving some record of their glory.

Knowing that it was hopeless to attempt to safeguard any considerable portion of their population against the ravages attendant upon the change, their scientists directed the energies of the race to the task of preparing some means for the preservation of a representative to serve whatever race emerged from the coming catastrophe to raise man once more to his lofty pinnacle as reigning intelligence on the globe. By means of those instruments which had enabled them to study the nebula, they knew of the existence of the sun and the moon—though their conception of these heavenly bodies could not have been like ours—and even as they had studied the effects of certain rays of both sun and moon, so they analyzed the gas of the nebula. And though they had no samples of the gas on which to experiment with a view to nullifying its effects, they soon evolved means whereby they might preserve their representative.

By directing high frequency rays of tremendous power upon the mountain in which they proposed to place their representative for safekeeping, they reduced certain localized sections to a state of plasticity. Great machines gouged out a passageway down as far as sea level and tore away from the foundations of the great mountain that vast amount of rock whose absence created the "Shrine". Working in conjunction with the great ray generators, engineers, looking like puny midgets in comparison with the gigantic machines, distributed the tremendous quantity of rock so obtained over a considerable area about the valley which formed their base of operations. A system of lighting was placed within the Shrine, together with a plumbing system, supplies, books, and other comforts sufficient to ensure the welfare of the Shrine's occupant during a period equal to about one-twentieth of the average lifetime of one of their race.

It was supposed that the best way of ensuring the accomplishment of the prodigious labor necessary to locate the Shrine and free its occupant was to imbue the entire affair with a religious significance. Finding the Shrine and its contents would, it was believed, amply repay its discoverers for their toil. To that end, a scientist, Alon, was given the task of writing out, in religious vein, the story that would lead to the location of the Shrine, embodying many pro-

phesies which their knowledge of science enabled them to predict would come about when the passageway was complete.

BEFORE THE arrival of the nebula, sufficient of the atmosphere was enclosed within the cavern to keep life normal for the occupant during the time he would remain there. Chemicals for renewing the oxygen of the air were adjusted to keep the atmosphere constantly fresh. The process by which the rock walls of the Shrine were plasticized rendered them, as they resolidified, impervious to penetration by the gas of the nebula.

During the completion of these preparations, it was decided that upon Alon should devolve the great honor and responsibility of being the dweller in the Shrine. Immediately upon hearing the choice of the people, he retired to his home to make ready, it was supposed, for his long imprisonment. Only at rare intervals did he appear, and for short periods of time. Just before the arrival of the nebula, Alon took up his residence within the Shrine.

A lightly constructed, enclosed shelter, insulated against the effects of the gas of the nebula, was erected in the valley in connection with the tunnel leading to the Shrine, for the scientists wished to experiment on the gas itself to make certain beyond possibility of error that they were right in their analysis of it before sealing the Shrine upon Alon. In this way the time-element between the Shrine and the sheltered part of the valley would be the same.

The experiments, conducted as soon as possible after the nebula enshrouded the Earth, indicated that, once the atmosphere was mixed with the gas, the combination could not in turn combine freely with undiluted portions of the Earth's old atmosphere. This gave rise to perplexity as to how it would be possible for Alon, when the Shrine had been opened to the world of the distant future, to increase the speed of his existance to approach that of the outer world. Finally two large, cone-shaped projectiles, their mouths timed to open when they were outside the Earth's atmosphere and in the body proper of the nebula, were shot, in a carefully calculated parabola, into the gaseous body. There they gathered a cargo of the undiluted gas. This was concentrated chemically so that it could be kept in two large vases which were placed in the Shrine for Alon's use at the proper time.

Those working in connection with the Shrine were provided with insulated suits in order that they

might, when the Shrine was sealed, introduce into the suits sufficient of the undiluted gas to quicken their existence-rate to that of those in the outer world. Alon's daughter had been permitted to stay in the Shrine with him up to the time when he must depart. At that time, her figure, garbed in one of the suits, was seen to emerge from the mouth of the passageway. She waved her hand, which was the signal to the anxiously waiting engineers that all was ready. At once the great machines were started, the passageway to the Shrine was filled in with the plastic rock, and the mountain was resolidfied, the same in appearance as before the cavern had been created in its heart, but bearing now the precious representative of a race.

But the people had failed to take into consideration one thing. Beyond anything that might accrue to him in either his own time or that of the world into which he was to journey, Alon loved his motherless daughter, Xenolie. To accompany him on his journey, a wonderfully sculptured image of her had been placed in the Shrine near the mouth of the passageway; but even this seemed poor compensation for the loss of his daughter. And so, on the fateful eve of his departure, it was Xenolie who occupied the Shrine, for Alon had been unable to resist the temptation to give to his loved one the great destiny that was to have been his.

Secretly, in the time during which the people had thought him preparing for the journey, Alon had prepared a duplicate of the Word shown to the scientists, substituting, in place of references to a male god, passages referring to a Goddess, Xenolie; and it was this duplicate which had been placed in the crystal case on the valley wall. Knowing that Xenolie would never have consented to his great sacrifice and fearing lest she urge his duty, Alon had drugged her at the last moment and, after a final loving kiss, had departed. He knew it would be hopeless to attempt to get in touch with her by mental telepathy for he would have lived the remainder of his life long before she should have awakened from her trance. But even he did not forsee that the solidifying of the rock would cause it to expand, thus contracting and compressing the atmosphere within the Shrine sufficiently to change Xenolie's drugged state to one almost of suspended animation. Since a much longer time than had been anticipated elapsed before the Indians reached the Shrine, it was well that the miscalculation had occurred.

WHEN WONDERINGLY she awakened, and realized what had happened, Xenolie wept inconsolably. She prayed to the Supreme Being for the repose for her father and the the great race who must long since have become age-old dust after having fulfilled their intention to make the valley fertile and attractive to those who must come to free her. She thought much of these things, and her thoughts—ponderous, forceful, and inspiring as they must have been to the prayerful, subconscious minds of the Indian priests who lived at that time—had a subtle effect upon them. Xenolie, too, was conscious from time to time of sudden moods—some gentle, some depressed—caused, though she did not realize it, by the mass worship of the Indians.

At last she reasoned that the time must have come for the vases to be emptied; and, though she hesitated fearfully at thought of the unknown world upon which she would be cast, she finally upset one of them, then the other, releasing the gas.

At intervals thereafter, she caught sight of me and told me of herself, her mastery of mental telepathy making possible communication between us, for her sensitive mind greatly aided me. None of the youths who had preceded me had she seen for none had succeeded in establishing that mental rapport which was a necessary preliminary to prepare her to look in the right place for her admirers.

These particulars answered all the riddles I had encountered in the valley and in the Shrine itself. The longevity of the Indians was explained by the partial merging of the two atmospheres, quickening in some degree the life-rate of the matter composing the Shrine and its beautiful occupant and slowing, in like degree, the rate at which the valley dwellers lived. Penetration of the Veil had been impossible because of the conflicting time-elements of those organs which had penetrated and those not yet accelerated. That I had been unable to see Xenolie without staring for hours at one spot in the Veil was natural, since my eyes, used to seeing things existing at my own time-rate, were incapable of adjusting themselves otherwise to the visualization of objects within the Veil.

It was apparent that Xenolie must come away from the Shrine soon if she were to fulfill the expectations of the Indians during their lifetime or hers. For even as the old race had been depleted with the coming of the "quick-life," so must it wither the lives of all in the valley who came in contact with it. I believed that the two atmospheres

had approached sufficiently near each other's rate of existence to permit the passage of a human being from one to the other. There was still considerable uncertainty that I was right, but further delay might be disastrous.

Gently I told Xenolie what I could of my conjectures and described to her the situation outside the Veil. She readily understood and promised to prepare to leave the Shrine. We arranged a time at which I should come to bring her to her worshipers.

5

ON THE day appointed, all the people gathered in the cavern, leaving the valley deserted. They were ranged in the temple niches and all along the ledge of rock, in number only about two hundred, men, women, and children. Tears came unbidden to my eyes at sight of so few, and a great throbbing lump arose in my throat as I noticed their apparent frailty and the ethereally calm look of contentment, pride, and anticipation that illumined every face.

I stood alone at the top of the steps leading to the floor of the Shrine. At the hour set, I began the descent. Through the Veil I could see a shadow that I knew was Xenolie coming toward me, and I kept my thoughts constantly in touch with hers. I felt her trepidation and lent her all the strength at my command. And soon, with a quickening of my own heartbeats, I felt myself on the edge of the Veil.

From the ledge above sounded the great sigh of the worshipers. Led by the High Priest, they began their humming chant, its low tones expressing a yearning greater, it seemed to me, than the human heart could long support. The humming grew louder as I pressed my hands into the Veil; it was as though the people were bending their every energy to the task of helping me through it.

My hands grew curiously numb, as though the blood were driven from them. Still I did not hesitate. As I felt the Veil near my face, I drew a long, deep breath and pushed forward!

My heart seemed to stand still for a moment. I reeled. Exhaling slowly, I conserved that last breath as long as possible. And then, hardly daring to hope for life, I drew in another.

And lived! With relief as great as though I had just been granted reprieve from death, I opened eyes that I had instinctively closed as I passed through the Veil. The reeling sensation passed; the flickering spots disappeared from before my eyes and I saw Xenolie!

She was not twenty feet away, and was coming toward me at a

slow walk that changed to a run when she saw that I was looking at her. Directly into my extended arms she ran, and clung to me like a frightened child. In that moment, I wondered how I could ever have thought her a goddess.

I reassured her as best I could. We could see the waiting throng quite clearly through the Veil, though when the people made any movement, the part in motion disappeared momentarily from our view, moving too swiftly for our eyes to follow. As we passed through the Veil I had so recently entered, we felt a quickening of our heartbeats and gasped for breath as though we had been running.

This sensation quickly passed and we heard a great shout of exaltation from the prostrate Indians. They, representatives of a race which had waited ages for this climactic event, were seeing a great prophesy fulfilled. In accordance with the Word of the Gods, they beheld the reward of Faith—a Goddess made mortal for their sake.

PEACEFULLY, contentedly, exaltedly lived the Indians. If their Goddess seldom revealed signs of her former divinity, was this not natural in one who had become mortal even as they? In perfect happiness a few years passed. Occasional pilgrimages were made by all to the Shrine, where the Word rested upon the couch which had been Xenolie's. Then I told the people, as gently as I could, that I wished to take their Goddess on a journey to the outer world so that many nations might hear all that she might tell them. Though they seemed heartbroken at thought of her departure, they consented, for, they said that their own happiness must in some measure be shared with all the outside world.

On a bright, sunny morning of one of the curiously long days now enjoyed in the valley, Xenolie and I set out. We had approached the inner rim of the valley when a bird fell at our feet. Startled, I picked it up and examined it. No wound was apparent, and when I made an incision with my pocketknife, the blood was fresh and warm. Xenolie waited a moment while I walked to the limit of the valley's rim a few feet away where I noticed a slight haze much like the heat waves one sees beating up from the surface of a hot rock. Carefully, I extended my arm.

A feeling of numbness similar to that experienced at the Veil told me the truth. Slowly I drew back, and silently I returned to Xenolie, who was anxiously watching me. She, too, realized what had happened: the compressed gas in the

insulated vases had been more than sufficient to accelerate the time-rate of the atmosphere of the Shrine to that at which the outer atmosphere existed; it had continued to accelerate, through the years that had passed, the luminiferous ether both in the shrine and in the outer valley. Even as the days from winter to spring grow gradually longer unnoticed, so had the days in the valley. The valley is so sheltered that the winds have not dispersed this quickened atmosphere into the outer world where it would have been quickly dissipated. The difference in time-elements is great enough to create a barrier effectively preventing any attempt to leave the valley with Xenolie. Especially so since Xenolie has grown so fragile in the past few months.

AND SO I have written out all that has occurred to me since I left the Orient so long ago. I shall thrust this account outside the atomsphere of the valley, and if it is discovered in time, it may be possible for someone to come and hear the stories Xenolie tells me of her life in the old time. But as for me, I am quite content to stay with her few remaining Indians and with them to worship Xenolie. For is it not infinitely better to be happy with her than to be a wanderer on the face of the Earth away from her?

The Times We Had

by EDWARD D. HOCH

It was a great experience, spending a year on the Moon — one that would never be forgotten . . .

TURKMEN LEFT the air-train at the stop nearest his home and reached the house before Sara had returned from picking up their daughter at school. The house had not changed during the year he'd been away, though in the garden he could see a scattering of weeds that would have to be removed. A neighbor across the street waved, recognizing him, but Turkmen did not want to talk just then; he only wanted to see his wife and child once more.

"We didn't expect you so soon!" Sara gushed, running up the front walk to throw her arms around him. "Darling, darling — it's been a long twelve months. Too long."

And his daughter Sonia, tugging at his coat. "Daddy, tell us all about it! Tell us about the moon and the planets."

"I will dear, I will. It's great to be back." He carried little Sonia into the house while Sara bustled about, making coffee and picking up a scattering of toys and dolls. He smiled at her activity and said finally, "I live here, remember? You don't have to straighten up for me."

"Oh, Turk! It's so good to have you back! The letters and pictures were fine, but it just wasn't the same as having you here in person."

"Tell us, Daddy. Tell us."

"All right." He settled down with them, sipping his coffee and chatting — just as if he'd never

EDWARD D. HOCH is chiefly known for detective and mystery stories, under a variety of pseudonyms, as well as his own name, and you will find his first-published story *Village Of The Dead,* reprinted in the Summer 1966 issue (#1) of *STARTLING MYSTERY STORIES.* You will also find him, both under his own name and as Stephen Dentinger, in back issues of *MAGAZINE OF HORROR.* Now and then he turns to science fiction when an unusual or ironic notion comes to him. His first appearance in a science fiction magazine was *Versus,* in the June 1957 issue of *FANTASTIC UNIVERSE,* but we know not whether it was fantasy or science fiction. However, *The Last Paradox,* which ran in the October 1958 issue of *FUTURE SCIENCE FICTION* was science-directed fantasy, as it deals with time-travel.

been away. "Well, you've all seen enough pictures of the moon base to know what it looks like. A great plastic dome with little buildings inside. It took us about three days after blastoff to get there, and the base personnel threw a big party for us, as they always did for the replacements. It's a great place, really. All the comforts of home, as they say. Movies, entertainment, sightseeing trips around the craters . . . And the fellows I worked with were all just great."

"Were there any children, Daddy?"

He tousled her sandy hair and laughed. "No, because there are no mommies up there yet. Someday, maybe."

"They've been talking about colonization again?" Sara asked.

"They're always talking about it. Someday they'll do it."

"Could you see us, at night?"

He nodded. "I watched Earth rise over the dome, just the way we watch the moon from here. It's quite a sight. I have some pictures."

"Tell us about the other planets, Daddy!"

"Well, we made several exploratory flights—orbiting Mars but not landing. That was the longest trip, of course, even with the new cosmic ships."

Sara nodded, her hands clutching his as if she would never let him go again. "We read about it in the papers."

He opened his bag and took out gifts for them both—a doll and a piece of moon-crust for Sonia, than a sparkling necklace of rare jade for his wife. "Just a few little things," he said. "I wish I could have brought back more, but of course there were weight restrictions in the spacecraft."

"But it's beautiful, Turk! I didn't know they had such things on the moon! Tell us more about it. What did you do when you weren't working?"

He leaned back in his chair, feeling good, and stared off into space as if still seeing those days and nights. "Oh, the times we had, the times we had. Drinking beer and singing with the fellows . . . And the sports events! The gravity's so low that we could hop around like jackrabbits. We played basketball—imagine me playing basketball!"

"But you're glad to be home?"

He nodded, holding her very close. "I'm glad to be home. A year out there is long enough. Let someone else do it now."

SHE TWISTED free and rose to pour more coffee. "I'd better get dinner started. Some magazine writer is coming to interview you tonight."

"What?"

"A writer from *CENTURY 21*. I knew you'd want to talk to him."

"Sure."

"Maybe they'll even use your picture. He said he'd been interviewing all the men when they returned from the moon. He's going to do some sort of story for the magazine."

"What time's he coming?"

"Oh, around eight."

Turkmen spent the time until dinner playing with Sonia, carrying her on his broad shoulders, fascinating her with more stories of the way it was on the moon, where men worked to extend the frontiers of space. Then he strolled around the house and yard, getting the feel of it once again, settling in for the month-long leave they had granted him. He read the evening newspaper off the teleprinter, and was surprised to see his picture featured with the local news. Only a few hundred men had thus far completed moon service, and he was still rare enough to be something of a hometown hero.

He thought about the magazine writer again, and while Sara and Sonia set the table for his homecoming feast he made a call on the satellite phone. Then he went in to dinner.

THE WRITER, when he arrived, proved to be a young man of about Turkmen's own age. His name was George Faze, and he'd brought a pocket recorder with him to take down the interview. He seemed friendly enough, and smiled at Sara and Sonia, but there was something in his eyes that Turkmen didn't like.

"It's quite a life out there,"

Faze said, setting out his recording equipment.

"It's a good life, a man's life. The sort of life frontiersmen had a hundred years ago, I suppose."

Sara sat with them for a time, listening to Turkmen's stories with a glow of prideful pleasure. Then at last she went off reluctantly to put Sonia to bed. "A fine family," the writer commented.

"You must have missed them."

"I did. I missed everything about Earth, with its green hills and snowy winters and I guess especially the people. But we had some great times up there. I remember the night we returned from orbiting Mars. They had a celebration, as they often did, and some of us got roaring drunk. We were bouncing all over the lunar landscape in our suits." He went on, telling and retelling the stories that Georg Faze had come to hear. After nearly an hour, Sara brought them coffee and then went up to bed.

"I've talked to many of the others," Faze said. "They're just as enthusiastic. Would you go back again?"

Turkmen thought about that. "I think so. Briefly. I'd like to take my wife and daughter, so they could see it all too. It's such a beautiful place."

Faze sat for a moment staring at his recorder. Then he suddenly switched it off and turned to face Turkmen. "I've interviewed eighty-four men so far, Mr. Turkmen. Eighty-four men who'd completed one year of moon service. They all tell the same stories."

Turkmen smiled. "We all liked it very much."

"You don't understand what I'm saying, Mr. Turkmen. The things, many of them, that happened to you—well they're the same things that happened to other people."

"We were all there together."

"Some of these men were there years ago. Am I to believe that every few years a group of men gets drunk on the moon in exactly the same manner?"

Turkmen sat up a bit straighter. "What are you driving at?"

"I'll tell you. Back in 1970, when the United States and Russia joined forces to reach the moon, something changed. Both nations insisted on a sort of subtle censorship that we hadn't known before. Oh, plenty of news was released, but it all came from government handouts rather than on-the-spot reporting. Each nation blamed the other for the restrictions, and unfortunately nobody complained very much."

"What's this got to do with me?" Turkmen asked.

"I'VE BEEN working on this story for two years, and I think I'm about ready to break it. A story that will shock the world." He leaned closer, staring into Turkmen's quiet eyes. "I don't think you were ever on the moon, Mr. Turkmen. I don't think anyone ever reached the moon. You've spent the past year at a secret base in the Ural Mountains, being indoctrinated—or brainwashed—with this moon story."

"That's insane."

"I have evidence."

"Why would the government do anything like that?"

"Because they'd spent billions of dollars to reach the moon and failed. Because they couldn't admit to failure. Because during the past generation a fantastic hoax has grown to mammoth proportions here on Earth. Fake news, fake photographs, everything fake!"

"You're crazy."

"Am I? We'll see what our readers think, especially about that secret base in the Ural Mountains."

"You're really going to print that?"

Faze pocketed his recorder. "I am. It's time the world knew that no one ever reached the moon or any other planet. Goodnight, Mr. Turkmen."

Turkmen watched him leave, then walked to the window to follow his progress down the street. The writer was two houses away when the dark minicar drew abreast of him and two men jumped out. There was hardly any struggle. In the darkness, none of the neighbors noticed.

Turkmen sighed and went upstairs to bed. Sonia was still awake, and she called to him for a drink of water. When he brought it, she said, "Daddy, tell me some more stories about what it was like on the moon. Please, Daddy, please!"

He sat down on the edge of her bed, and ran his hand through her sandy hair. "It was wonderful, dear, just wonderful. You wouldn't believe the times we had . . ."

MASTER OF THE OCTOPUS

by EDWARD OLIN WEEKS

The inventor seemed to be too trusting; was it a trick?

Introduction

by SAM MOSKOWITZ

To read a "story" far more incredible than science fiction, one need only pick up a history of American invention. The genius of American invention rested in its practicality. The emphasis was on putting theories to work and this was encouraged by the patent laws and the free enterprise system which made it possible for a good invention to make its creator a fortune.

The crowning jewel in the diadem of American invention, so far as the world was concerned, proved to be Thomas Alva Edison's electric light, first put to practical use in 1879. Because it could be visually dramatized, this invention seized the imagination of the world as no other device before or since. It fulfilled almost a spiritual desire on the part of mankind.

From the earliest days of science fiction, a method of producing bright light in an adequate, unflickering manner has been reflected in the author's prophecies. Cyrano de Bergerac, telling of his adventures in *Voyage to the Moon* (1650), told of the inadequacy of bowls filled with glow worms as a method of lunar illumination and at his amazement when: "My spirit stayed not till the company should complain of it, but went up to his chamber and came immediately back again with two bowls of fire so sparkling that all wondered he burned not his fingers. 'These incombustible tapers,' said he, 'will serve better than your wick of worms. They are rays of the sun, which I have purged from their heat; otherwise the corrosive qualities of their fire would have dazzled and offended your eyes; I have fixed their light, and enclosed it within these transparent bowls. That ought not to afford you any great cause of admiration; for it is not harder for me, who am a native of the sun, to condense his beams, which are the dust of that world, than it is for you to gather the atoms of the pulverized earth of this world."

When *The Master of the Octopus* by Edward Olin Weeks was first published in *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE*, October, 1899, most of the civilized world was still lit by gas, even though the electric light was 20 years old. The invention of the light bulb was the easiest part of the task. Generators had to be built capable of manufacturing the quantity of electricity needed, cables and wires had to be constructed to transfer the electricity. Hundreds of small inventions had to be realized to make electric lighting feasible and scores of industries created to supply the materials needed.

It was small wonder that, despite the acclaim which greeted the electric light, doubts were expressed as to whether it was actually the final answer. The basic premise of this story revolves around the invention of a light source superior to that of the electric lamp. *PEARSON'S MAGAZINE* was a British publication, with an American edition widely distributed throughout the United States. In later years it commissioned special articles specifically for the American printing, but its fiction was usually bought in England and predominantly written by British authors. Keeping this fact in mind, it is interesting to note that the invention of a new

light source was attributed to an American, though the attitudes shown by employer to employee are thoroughly British.

The author of *The Master of the Octopus,* Edward Olin Weeks, was a versatile and highly competent short story writer of the nineties. His technical skill is clearly demonstrated in this short story, which is not only well organized and extremely well written, but is excellent science fiction including a careful attempt at believability. His excellence as a short story writer is suberbly demonstrated by the manner in which he employs the scientific explanation of his invention as a key element in the development of an effectively ironic close.

(Editor's Note: The resemblances between the present story and *Free Energy* by Harl Vincent, which appeared in the September 1930 issue of *AMAZING STORIES.* are interesting enough to notice, although the Vincent story is quite original in its own light.)

THE CONSOLIDATED Lighting Company of America was well-known to inventors all over the land. Indeed, its offices were in a continual state of siege; yet it must be confessed that many a man only entered its portals to leave behind him the ribs and thighbones of his business projects. So distinctly was this understood, that a sinister legend was attached to the transactions of the company with men of inventive skill, and it came to be called the Octopus.

The man of all others that the inventors were most anxious to meet was the masterful President, who owned and operated a vast majority of the shares of the company's stock.

He was a remarkable man—everybody admitted that. His name was a synonym of commercial skill. Having consolidated everything, he had become consolidated himself, and was certainly a rare example of complete ossification of heart and head. That the "old man"—as he was often spoken of by his able assistants—should ever be unable to cope with any other man, or men, was a matter beyond actual belief.

Now, on a certain eventful afternoon the President sat in his office in the failing light. A tap on the half-open door made him look up, and a youth with a card in his hand entered. He laid the bit of pasteboard in front of the great man, and then with a quick motion turned on the electric current above his desk.

It was a neat little card, and had on it the simple address:—

H. Morehurst,
Inventor of the Perpetual Lamp,
New York.

"The gentleman desires an interview," said the clerk.

The President glanced at the superscription and then at the clerk with an incredulous smile. "This is too much," he said; "yesterday I had a perpetual motion fiend, and now I have another with a lamp. Does he look dangerous, or is he like the other one: mild, vague, and easily rattled?"

"No," replied Masters, the clerk, "he isn't of the same sort; he is tall, well dressed, dignified, and exceedingly polite—a remarkable man I should say, one way or another."

"Well," replied the President, "tell the man to call again; impossible to see him this evening. Better tell him to call about two weeks later on. They often forget by that time to come at all."

The President leaned back in his chair, looking thoughtful.

His day's work was done, his mind was free for the morrow; but he sometimes wondered whether his lightning dispatch in business could keep pace with his ever widening schemes. Coming just at this particular hour, after a day of unusual mental activity, this crazy idea of a perpetual lamp, with all its grotesque possibilities, loomed up before him.

He was oppressed by the fact that he ould not quite dismiss it from his .nind. He felt an irritable suspicion that his nerves were getting out of order. It was, therefore, with no very good humour that he saw the clerk returning, as if with a second message. He looked sharply at the young man, who, he saw, carried in his hands a small black casket about five inches square.

"What's that thing?" he asked harshly. "I don't want to see it. Take it up to Waxham—he's always experimenting with diabolical machines—and let him tell me what it is."

The clerk turned to do as he was directed.

"Hold on!" was the second order, given briskly, and showing that the big man was coming into command of himself again, for no one had ever called him a coward. "Put that box down on my desk, and ask Waxham to come here, and my secretary, too."

He leaned over and looked at the little black casket.

It was exquisitely made of

wood, inlaid with pearl, but showed some signs of having been used and handled.

The President drew it towards him very gingerly, and put his ear down to listen. There was no sound of clockwork, or other moving mechanism. A simple little silver hasp, staple, and pin kept the lid closed.

In a moment, Waxham, the secretary, and the clerk came up to his desk.

The President gave the inventor's card to his righthand men and pointed to the box. "This is the very latest" was his sarcastic comment.

"Perpetual motion isn't in it," said Waxham, the Company's Expert; "if it were, we'd hear a noise."

"May be full of acids and thunderite," said the secretary; "the noise may come when the acids eat up the thunderite."

"Now what did H. Morehurst, Inventor of the Pertual Lamp, say about his box?" asked the President of the clerk.

"He siad: 'If you would open the box you would see the lamp.'" was the answer.

"The inventor is downstairs; I would propose to invite him up," said Waxham.

"Very good," replied the President; "four brave men ought to be able to face one idiot."

IN A MINUTE the clerk returned with H. Morehurst.

That he was a gentleman in every sense of the word, and in full possession of his rightful faculties, no one could have questioned for a moment.

The chief and his lieutenants were entirely unprepared for this apparition of a cultivated man, vigorous, easy in manners, with clear gray eyes shining finely under a compact and decidedly inventive forehead.

Mr. Morehurst caught the situation in an instant. He laughed with perfect good humor.

"This isn't any bomb business, gentlemen," he said; "it is all straight, innocent, and to the point. The construction of the lamp, the materials used, and how you may make another one like it will be fully explained by the inventor—for a consideration," he added abruptly, and with businesslike candor.

The President and Mr. Waxham looked at one another in stupefied wonder.

The former was the first to recover.

"Mr. Morehurst," he said, "how did a man of your evident intelligence ever come to apply such a foolish designation to any mortal invention as *perpetual?*"

"Because," replied Mr. Morehurst with perfect composure, "it is exactly the term to apply to my lamp; for, unless broken by accident or otherwise, it will continue to shine for a thousand years, or,

to speak more accurately, will shine perpetually."

"How long has it been burning without interruption?" asked the President sharply.

"For three years," answered the inventor, "although 'burning' is not quite the word to use, for that would imply consumption, and my lamp consumes nothing, neither gas, nor oil, nor spirits; nor is it electrical. To speak correctly, I should say that my lamp has been *shining* since I made it three years ago."

"And is it shining now under that cover, without heat?" inquired the Master of the Octopus.

"Certainly," said the inventor.

The President shook himself and rubbed his hands. "I would like to see your lamp," said he; "all this seems incredible."

"If you will allow me to turn out the light above your desk, I will show it to you with pleasure," Mr. Morehurst answered.

The inventor bent over his lamp, removed the little silver pin, and threw open the lid.

Contrary to all known rules or principles, the perpetual lamp filled the room with light — clear, silvery light, charming to the eyes.

The Master, the Expert, and Haler, the private secretary — men who thought they knew everything about the science of lighting — were all equally amazed.

They stood up, and pressing closely about the desk, examined the lamp minutely. It seemed (like all wonderful inventions) to be a very simple affair.

The casket was of ebony, with a deep lid, and to the solid bottom of the box was securely fastened a beautiful drum of silver, capped by a dome of crystal glass. Inside the dome was a bulb, also of glass, and firmly attached to the crown of the silver drum; and in this bulb, hermetically sealed, a radiant vapor, emitting a flood of light.

The experts looked and wondered, and were silent. But the Master rubbed his hands with positive pleasure. All the latent resources of his mind became alert and active, and while Waxham was still in the fog of wonder, he was mapping out and planning the conquest of the industrial and commercial world. At length, almost unwillingly, he turned his eyes from the Perpetual Lamp, and looked with sparkling interest at its inventor.

"This is very good, very good indeed, Mr. Morehurst," said he; "and is your invention covered by patents?"

"Not yet," the inventor answered; "it is simply a secret, known only to myself."

"And what method can you take to satisfy me that this light is perpetual?"

"I will leave it in your hands until you are fully convinced."

"Very well, that will be satis-

factory," assented the President.

"I will call for it after a time," said the inventor, with careless in difference, rising to take his departure. "But let me warn you first that this is the only model I have, and, therefore, great care should be taken that it may not get broken. And let me add," he continued, "that there is nothing in that drum to generate the vapor. If the drum or glass should break, the vapor would escape, and that would end the exhibition of light."

"Have you no more definite address to give than that on your card?" asked the Master of the Octopus. "New York is a big place, you know."

"It is not necessary; I will surely come for my pet;" and, with a polite good evening to all in the office, the man who had stolen the sun's light passed quietly down the stars.

The great establishment was closed as usual for the night; and yet for several hours thereafter the chief and his aids continued to discuss the wonders of the Perpetual Lamp.

Eventually the President directed that a compartment should be cleared in his huge fireproof safe for the special reception of the lamp.

The others observed that he set the combination for the lock himself, instead of leaving it to Haler, as was usually the case.

The fact was significant of the value he placed upon the discovery, for he always left the enormous secrets of the safe in Haler's charge; however, he was perfectly frank about the matter. He wrote the combination on a slip of paper, and then told Haler to make note that he had placed the slip in one of the pockets of his memorandum book for personal safe keeping.

He did this, he said, because he thought the precaution was justly due to the inventor of the lamp.

The time to go had come, and the chief paused for a moment while he looked around him upon the expectant faces of his assistants. They knew that on an occasion like this it was often his habit to do them some unusual favor, perhaps to bind them more securely to his purposes.

"Haler," he said, "tell the cashier tomorrow morning to increase you salary and Waxham's and Masters' by ten percent;" and then, with a hearty goodnight, he hurried down to the *coupe*, which had been waiting for him, and was driven home in an unusually exalted frame of mind.

ON THE following day, with his office door closed and locked, and Haler and Waxham at his elbow, the President looked once more at the shining bulb, and marvelled over the simplicity of the invention.

He saw clearly enough that

the constructive cost was small, and that the selling price, even at an enormous percentage of profit would still make it the most economical light in the world. He had wrestled with the giants—the gas companies, the electrical concerns, the oil magnates—but, with this thing assured, how could their battalions face his fire?

The perpetual lamp in private houses, public buildings, cars, steamships, streets, municipalities, would make all the great lighting companies stagger and fall. He gloried in his chances, and gloated over the little lamp, which was to make his fame even more widespread.

In a few days, somehow, the news, more or less vague, got abroad. The stock of the Consolidated Lighting Company of America rose in the market at a fabulous rate. There were bidders by the thousand, and no sellers. The gas companies, the electrical concerns, and oil magnates, all heard rumors of impending doom.

As fast as the stock of the Consolidated Lighting Company of America went up their stock went down; while trusty scouts who were sent out returned with almost unquestionable reports of lamps which burned night and day and would continue to burn perpetually with the transmitted glory of the sun.

The cables carried the strange news to Europe, and there, too, the great interests assailed began to tremble and cast anxious eyes towards America.

While all these strange sayings were disturbing the commercial peace, the one and only little Perpetual Lamp continued to shed its undiminished lustre upon the Master of the Octopus.

The more he thought and the more he worked the better had he become satisfied that all his plans were well laid.

He had wanted time before the inventor came again to fix all his connections; and now that his patent lawyers and his best experts and his most skilful mechanics had all been taught their parts he began to look forward to the inventor's visit with much anxiety.

Not even Waxham, with his ferret eyes and years of technical study, could offer the slightest idea as to how the vapor in the bulb generated. Eminent scientists called in, in consultation, knew no more than Waxham; they were amazed, and declared readily enough that the world was just beginning to learn the secret of the sun.

So the President waited for the inventor, but the inventor did not come. In the flush of the new enterprise, the President had hardly had time to think or consider that such silence and inattention upon the part of an inventor were most unusual.

But now when he was ready and eager for the visit, the passing

hours seemed weeks and the days were like months.

As the days lengthened into weeks, and the weeks into months — still without an encouraging sign — the Master of the Octopus admitted that for once he had been beaten by an inventor.

The rumors about his failure to meet the enemy grew exasperating, until at last, to silence rasping tongues, he showed to a few select reporters for the press the perpetual lamp; and then the gas companies, the electrical concerns, and the oil magnates shook with fear and trembling again.

This widely published notice of the lamp, he thought, would certainly recall the inventor to his own, if alive; nevertheless, another fortnight went by, and he did not come, and in bitterness of spirit the President gave him up as dead. Indeed, he wished that he himself were dead. These months of delay and torture had broken his spirit and injured his health. The regular business of the company was suffering as much; everything had been planned for a change to the perpetual lamps, and the continued postponement had harmed the company's legitimate trade.

And now, when almost all hope had been given up, Morehurst came! At the same time in the afternoon, without prelude and without apology, he handed Masters his card and expressed a desire to see the President.

MASTERS FLEW up the wide stairs; he rushed into the office of the President without ceremony; he threw down the card, and his eager "He has come!" was heard by every person on the floor. Haler hastened to his chief, Waxham came down — a hundred curious eyes watched to see the inventor ascend the stairs.

Masters hurried below to invite him up — all were eager to see the features of the remarkable man who had startled the world with his stolen sunlight. His face was as calm, his manner as collected, as on the former occasion; but he saw before him the wrecks of the men he had left on that eventful night.

The President stood up feebly to welcome him, Waxham looked at him with feverish eyes, and Haler shook so that he was obliged to be seated; Masters alone was active and exultant.

"Why, how is this," said the inventor, "has a sickness swept your ranks?"

"Not actual sickness," answered the President fretfully, "but mental sickness, delay, annoyance. Where have you been? We are ready and willing to buy your lamp; name your price."

Morehurst sat down and looked at the men before him attentively.

"I wish to be honest," he said; "I will explain the construction of the lamp, I will sell you the model, I will give up all right and title to

it for just what the experiment has cost me, namely, 6,000 pounds.

"Masters," said the President, "got to the safe and take out thirty bills of one thousand dollars each, and give them to Mr. Morehurst."

The inventor put the money carefully away in his pocket.

"That little lamp," said he, "cost a fortune. Pass it to me, and I will explain how it is made."

Turning the lamp in his hand, the inventor thought for a moment.

"You will all recall," said he, "when I mention it, the familiar experiment of the diamond inclosed in a cavity in a piece of soft iron, the orifice being stopped with a plug of the same metal; then the mass was embedded in a combination of sand and crucibles, and the whole exposed to intense heat; when examined, it was found that the diamond had disappeared and the iron had turned to steel.

"By this simple test it was ascertained that the ugly fragment of black coal and the magnificent diamond are twin carbon-brothers; and it is not too much to say that they both contain the stored-up energy of the sun. Am I right about this, Mr. Waxham?"

Waxham nodded; he could not speak. To his astute intellect, the generation of the luminous vapor in the drum and bulb of the little lamp began to assume a more definite hypothesis; but the President and Haler did not suspect what was passing in the mi d of the company's expert. The first experimental cost of an invention they regarded as of small consequence when warranted by eventual results.

Before them they saw shining the modest little lamp, simple in construction, and yet more potent for light than the powerful dynamo running with lightning speed in the basement of their building.

If Morehurst had asserted that his outlay had been 20,000 pounds, that amount to them would have seemed a mere bagatelle.

"Then, so far," said the inventor, "I have made my meaning clear.

"Well, to proceed, we also know that if a diamond be placed in a glass vessel containing oxygen gas, and then subjected to the intense heat of a large convex lens, or burning glass, the diamond disappears, and there remains in the vessel carbonic acid instead of oxygen.

"Now, while this test proves, as did the first one, that the diamond, like charcoal, is pure carbon, it also proves that the gem may be vaporized.

"All my experiments were made with the purpose of vaporizing the diamond by a new method, for I believed that the vapor so obtained would have the illuminating nature of the sun.

"To be brief (for the rest is merely a matter of written specifica-

tions), I succeeded in my endeavor, and the proof of my success is this perpetual lamp."

Morehurst paused impressively, handled the lamp with evident affection and regard, and then passed it over to the President with a sigh of sorrowful regret.

"It is entirely your property now," he said, "but you must pardon some show of feeling upon my part when I say that."

The President smiled uneasily as he accepted the lamp; he bagan to see the issue of the affair.

"Mr. Morhurst," said he decisively, "let us come to a conclusion. What was the cost of that lamp, and what would one or more like it cost?"

Mr. Morehurst reflected. He seemed to be making a very careful, mental computation.

"The cost of that lamp," he answered very deliberately, "may be figured in this way. The mere drum, bulb and case are not worth mentioning; but to generate the vapor in the lamp required four fine diamonds of the first water, and for them I paid 1,500 pounds apiece. One or more lamps of the same power would cost per lamp, fully as much!"

FOR A MINUTE there was not a sound in the room, save the ticking of the clock above the mammoth safe.

Even Masters, who, with boyish carelessness, had not figured out the drift of the matter, now understood the case.

The silence was oppressive. Over the President's desk swung a magnificent electric lamp, noted the world over for its superb light.

As if to relieve the other, Mr. Morehurst spoke again, with his eyes fixed upon this lamp.

As he spoke, the men who listened saw a change pass over his face. A cold gleam flashed from his eye, and on his handsome lip was a curve of triumph.

"By the way, Mr. President," Morehust said, "that grand lamp over your desk (the sole property, I believe, of your company) was the invention of my sister's husband. He never received a penny for it, and they both died in poverty. Please remember that fact when you gaze upon the light of your innumerable perpetual lamps."

With these words, reaching out for his hat and gloves, the inventor bowed to the assembled gentlemen and quickly left the office.

For fully five minutes not a word was said.

The President's face was pallid; Waxham and Haler—who knew all about the stolen invention—felt exquisite twinges of remorse, and no one care to speak.

Near the President's elbow stood the little perpetual lamp, shining like a jewel.

Its new owner made a nervous motion with his hand, and by so

doing brushed the fragile object from the desk.

It fell to the floor with a crash, and its beautiful light went out forever! The President of the Consolidated Lighting Company of America barely noticed.

"Masters," he said, rising to his feet," you may go home with me tonight; I'm not feeling well. Waxham and Haler, you'll have to run affairs for a few days, until I am able to attend business as usual."

THE RECKONING

Three stories were in contention for first place in the Spring issue, first Manning and then West swapping leads several times. Meanwhile, Hamilton was coming up from behind, and about midpoint, he forged ahead, to remain there right up to the finish point. At the end he was a couple of lengths ahead (it would have taken more than two "dislike" votes to drop him back to second place). The final score shows as follows:

(1) *The Moon Menace,* by Edmond Hamilton; (2) *Seeds From Space,* by Laurence Manning; (3) *Dust,* by Wallace West; (4) *The White City,* by David H. Keller, M.D.; (5) *Rimghost,* by A. Bertram Chandler.

And the winning story in the Summer issue, also came from behind, for up to the last ballot received, the race had been between Manning and Mitchell. Even so, the first three stories were within a nose of each other, for another ballot (unless it were an exact duplicate of the one before) would have shifted positions. But the time comes when we have to declare the race over, as much as we mourn ballots that arrive too late. So here are the finals on the Summer issue:

(1) *The Man Who Awoke,* Laurence Manning, tied with J. A. Mitchell's *The Last American;* (2) *Beyond the Singing Flame,* by Clark Ashton Smith; (3) *Disowned,* by Victor Endersby; (4) *A Single Rose,* by Jon DeCles.

The 3rd and 4th place stories, while more than a length between the first 3, were also very close together. DeCles actually made a far better showing with his charming tale than that bottom position would suggest, as he drew a fair number of both "outstanding" and "first place" votes. And while a single "dislike" vote was received by two stories, they were from readers who do not care for the author's styles in any of their stories.

Master Of The Brain

(Continued from page 33)

could not go back; there was nothing left but to go forward, friendless and forlorn though he might be. Somewhere, he thought with a sudden surge of hope, somewhere in the dim future there must lie an answer to the enigma of life. He would find in it his reward. But whether or no, what was past could never be brought back. He thought of the lines of the Persian poet:

"The moving finger writes and, having writ,
Moves on. Nor all your piety and wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line.
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

And now the light went out of the sky and the stars appeared—old familiar friends, though even they had been altered slightly by the inexorable march of the equinoxes. The moon was rising early that night and silhouetted against its glory the dark figure of Winters could be observed as he squeezed among the concealing shrubs. He vanished from sight and the sound of the capstone being moved in place was audible at a few feet distance.

Then the moon rose stately and cold and shone down upon that empty wilderness as she had shone for centuries and as she would continue to shine for yet untold eons of time.

THE CITY OF SPIDERS

by H. WARNER MUNN

In the heart of this still-unknown land dwelt the survivors of a past beyond conscious remembering.

IT WAS on the 12:30 train from Athol to Boston that I met the man with the beady eyes. I mention the eyes particularly, for they were the distinctive features; it is very odd that they are all that I can remember of his appearance. Vaguely I recall that he wore a gray suit, rather light for our changeable November weather, but even that is uncertain.

It was a cut-rate day in 192—, with a slash in prices for an excursion, and the coach was well filled. He got on at Gardner, with a small crowd that hustled him down the aisle and washed him beside me, so bewildered that without bothering to ask me if the other half of my seat was taken, he plumped himself down with a relieved sigh.

"Rather cool," I thought, and without knowing it I must have spoken aloud, for he nodded brightly with a quick little snap of his head, saying, "Yes, isn't it?"

Amused at the natural mistake, I determined, since he was so friendly, to strike up an acquaintance to while away the tedium of a

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H. WARNER MUNN was one of *H. P. Lovecraft's* many correspondents and the two visited each other now and then. His first story arose from one of HPL's letters and we assume that this was *The Werewolf Of Ponkert*, which was the cover and leadoff story for the July 1925 issue of *WEIRD TALES*. Not only did it show a very high quality of literary skill (as does of all Munn's published fiction that we have seen), but it was a truly different approach to lycanthropy for its time, as the viewpoint in the tale is that of the werewolf himself and his relationship to the leader of the werewolf pack. This was the first of a series of tales devolving about the werewolf clan.

In 1939 WT ran Munn's four-part serial, *King Of The World's Edge*, telling of the sorceror Myrdhinn, master of Druid magic who had forsworn the black arts when he became a Christian convert, and his expedition with a small band of followers, in a galley, to America in the days of Arthur, Imperator of Britian. It has recently been reprinted by Ace Books (#M-152, 45c) and is a very fine novel on the borderline between science fiction and fantasy.

Munn's second appearance in *WEIRD TALES* was not a werewolf story, but this present tale—one which might have appeared in Gernsback's *AMAZING STORIES* in its early years. (However, it is very possible that the story was submitted to Farnsworth Wright before the first issue of AS was published, as *The Cit of Spiders* appeared in October 1926 and Editor Wright often held accepted stories for a year or more before running them. Sometimes this was an economic necessity; if he wanted to pay his author WT's top rate Wright might have to wait some time until it could fit into an issue where the tedious but needful budget-juggling made such payment possible.)

three-hours ride and incidentally perhaps to learn something that value to me in a novel I am writing. Every man has in him one good story if it can only be dug out, but some are buried pretty deep.

I forget our first words, but we exhausted the subject of the weather rather thoroughly and were pleasantly drifting into a discussion of our fellow passengers when I noticed a movement on his sleeve.

It was one of the common barn-spiders that are so often seen festooning rafters with velvety soft hangings of dove-gray. Probably chilled by the cold wind outside, the warmth of the car had brought it out of its concealment to reconnoiter.

A spider gives me the creeps, now more than ever that I know why, but then as always I felt a surge of revulsion, struck if off his arm and crushed it with my foot.

He was smiling oddly when I looked up. Do you know why you did that?"

"Because I hate the things!" I answered. "Alwayd did."

I answered. "Always did."

'dislike'," he replied, "but I can truly say that I **hate** them, for I know more about them in one sense than any other living man on Earth today. Shall I tell you why?"

"Do!" I said, smiling a secret smile within me, and prepared to take mental notes, for I scented a story at last.

MY NAME is Jabez Pentreat; my mother was English and my father a Welsh miner. They moved to this country in 1887, two years before I was born, as work was scarce and living but a bare existence in the old country. Here they found it but little better, although with more ambition they might have become moderately well-to-do. When I was young, things were in a bad way for us, father worked spasmodically, while mother took in washings to tide us over hard times. We never had much money.

I went to grade school until I was fourteen, and was then obliged to leave in order that I might bring in a few dollars by my bodily labor. Brains counted for nothing in the manufacturing town where I lived. It was one of father's favorite sayings that 'Book-larnin' never did nobody no good!' So you see I was up against it. Three years later I ran away from home.

I found work in Boston in connection with a fruit-importing company, and learned something of the world, as represented by the harbor-ports of South America.

In one of those little coast towns I met a man who was to change my life. You have heard of Sir Adlington Carewe, the man who astounded the scientific world with his masterly monograph on *Possibilities of the Insect World.* To him I am indebted for all my knowledge. At his own expense, I finished school and entered college. At his desire, I concentrated upon botany, entomology and other kindred studies, for he hoped that I should take his place in the line of discoverers when he was gone.

Well, I can say with pride that his pains were not wasted upon me, although he is not where he can appreciate the changes that time has wrought upon that crude roustabout that I was then. I understand that he is on the west coast of Africa at present, experimenting with the higher forms of apes.

South America always fascinated me with its magnificent opportunities for studying insect life. It is a forcing-house for vegetation, and in its dank, steaming

jungles, for thousands of square miles untouched by white feet, who knows what marvelous things may exist, all unknown to the outer world? I have found a few, but I have only skimmed the edges and never expect to learn much more, although I leave again in the spring.

Have you ever paused to think of the swarming life that goes on day after day, beneath your feet, busy with its own affairs, as you with yours? Another world goes about its business of loves and hates, of living and dying, of little engineering works as important to them as a Brooklyn Bridge or a Panama Canal to us, although one step of your foot can destroy the work of days.

There are grass-eaters and there are carnivores that prey upon them, and others that in turn feed upon the slayers. There are cities in miniature, slaves and masters, workers, idlers, miners and aviators, and all this teeming life may be in your own back yard, unnoticed except when your wife complains because the ants persist in finding the sugar-bowl, and the flies "just will get in somehow"

And remember, this life is alien to us. Although it is so similar to us in some ways, it is a world in itself, far from humans. One writer, I have read, remarks in a joking way that it may even be alien to this planet.

HERE IS A thought I would like to have you ponder. While all other insects have their appointed prey, each feeding upon one certain enemy, herbivore or plant and rarely touching other types of food (thus by the wise provisions of nature keeping down the swarming life that otherwise would overwhelm humanity), the spider feeds indiscriminately upon all!

The spider! Dread ogre of the insect world! How he is feared! Not only by his prey, but also by man, against whom, by reason of his size, *and that alone,* he has but little power.

And South America is the insect paradise. Nowhere else will you find such impenetrable morasses, such dank and steamy jungles, such unbelievable monstrosities, in both vegetable and animal kingdoms.

But I digress. To my tale, then, and think your own thoughts. I ask for no comment or interruption.

In search of a sable butterfly, with a coffin outlined in white upon each wing, of which only one collector has ever secured a specimen, I came at last to Ciudad Bolivar, which lies in Venezuela.

In this town I obtained eight native Indians, who were invaluable at times and nuisances at others. We searched in that mysterious mountain land of Guayana, entering where the Caroni River empties into the Orinoco.

The Caroni's waters are combed by cataracts and rapids, but are well-known for fifty miles—here the dense woods begin and man's knowledge ends, for excepting myself, I believe no white man has ever explored those forests.

It is one of the mystery lands of Venezuela, the never-never lands where almost anything can happen and usually does. Usually a white in that section is rather a being to be taken care of, as white men are more valuable in a gift-producing way alive than dead; but there are tribes of nomadic Indians, head-hunters by choice, that roam the dismal forests and to them the head of a white man, shrunk to the size of an orange, is their Kohinoor or Great Mogul! Not far away live the Maquitares, a tribe of blonds, almost white, and at a greater distance, the Guaharibos, whose savagery has never allowed the head-waters of the Orinoco to be discovered.

My Indians sometimes heard their drums growling to one another far away in the steamy tropic nights, but they came always from the north and south, never from the west toward which we were pressing. On the sixth day from the river, we heard them behind us, but still far away; and as we cooked our meals in the *tambo,* a rude shelter from the night dews, such as the rubber hunters farther south construct, sometimes we wondered why they were upon all sides but never before.

On the ninth day we heard nothing but the ceaseless *drip-drip-drip* into the swampy ground and occasionally the roar of some dead forest giant crashing to earth, choked to death by parasitic vines that hid the tree from sight. That night the hunters came back empty-handed. We had not seen any animal all day, not even the usual troop of monkeys that howled down curses at us, swinging along under the forest roof, dropping fruit skins and nuts upon us and warning all life for miles that strangers were at hand.

We made hungry camp, for we travled light and my men were disposed to grumble because we were in unknown country and no one knew what lay before us.

The black butterfly was all but given up now, but I determined to press on three days more, and then, if there were no indications, to give it up as a bad job and go back, for I already had enough specimens to repay me for my trip.

Before I curled up in my hammock, I shook it to dislodge any insects that might be in its folds, and out dropped a large spider, the size of my hand. I smashed it with my boot and at the same time saw another. As I struck that one, screams arose from my Indians and they dashed for the fire. One was literally covered with the

vermin and dropped before he reached the light. In a moment we loaded the blaze with brush and had a bonfire that roared out six-foot flames.

2

YOU CAN NOT imagine the scene that met our sight! The things covered the ground and trees all about us. A carpet of gray was moving and rustling continually back from the light, and as the flames shot higher we could see that the twigs and branches hung low with their weight. Now and then one would drop with a plop on the ground as the light struck and scuttle over the backs of others till it found a place to rest. My hammock was now filled with the crawling things as a saucer is heaped with berries, sickening gray creatures with jet-black eyes that glistened hungrily, and all intently watching us.

We could hear a kind of low clicking and chittering as they opened and closed their mandibles. It seemed as though they were talking to one another while they waited for us, in a curiously knowing way, and those pinpoint eyes watched and gloated most obscenely expectant.

The body of the dead man was just outside the circle of light, and all night a swarming heap of spiders surged over and around it, while my Indians fed the fire for their lives, and race and caste were forgotten as we huddled, massed about the fire, sweat raining from us in the terrible heat.

Morning came at last, and as the sky began to brighten, the gray horrors grew thinner until only a few stragglers still roamed near the clean-picked skeleton; and when the sun rose they too crept to hiding places, leaving only the white bones to tell the story of that frightful night.

When all were gone, my Indians begged me to turn back. I refused, although my own inclinations pointed in that direction. I kept bold face and pointed out that by going west we would avoid the savages and leave this dreaded spot behind us. My head man looked grim, but said nothing. So on again! On into the jungle, fighting our way through thick tangled undergrowth, followed by dense clouds of mosquitoes and gnats, the only life we saw that day besides ourselves.

About noon, although we could not see the sun through the riot of vegetation, we found a small stream of clear water which abounded in small fish.

We dined royally on fish and fruit, in the midst of a deathlike stillness. Not a leaf rustled, no birds sang, not a monkey or any other animal did we see that day, and in the same breathless hush we made our tenth and last *tambo* that evening, having covered per-

haps fifteen miles during the day.

Keeping in mind the former night, we selected a clear open space for the erecting of our shelters, brought in an immense quantity of wood and sat around the fire in that charmingly complete and unqualified democracy of man when a common danger threatens.

Before long, just as the drums snarled faintly to the east, a little black and red creature scuttled out of the wood, bustled down to the water's edge and drank daintily. I recognized one of the most venomous of the arachnids, usually the size of a silver dollar, but this specimen was easily five inches across his scarlet-barred body. I determined to have it, and cautiously loosened my butterfly net from my pack. This breed is very timid, although its bite is so deadly, and I crept up on it with the utmost care.

About five feet away, it saw me, and instead of darting away, it jumped in my direction. Out of pure fright, I crushed it flat, and the scenes of the night before were now repeated almost identically, but now there were many of the new species mingled with the gray demons that had dragged down the bearer. It seemed as though there were concentric circles of varying types, arranged about a central point, and the nearer we approached the center, the more horrible and huge grew the individuals that composed each belt. I began to wonder what lay farther on!

Again we shivered around a roaring fire, speaking only in low whispers. The natives believed that our beseigers were forest devils, enraged at us for intruding into their private fastnesses.

Several times I feared for my life that night, for dark looks were cast at me, and twice there were those who advised strongly that I should be flung out to the filthy things as a sacrifice. But they could not quite screw up their courage to that point, for they knew that I would not submit tamely, and they feared that the taste of blood might enrage the creatures into a rush which would wipe out the survivors.

A sleepless night! A night of horror, beneath gloating, incredibly malignant eyes! A night that was a cross-section of eternity!

ABOUT TWO hours before morning, I dozed off, being startled awake again almost instantly by yells of fright. Before me just outside the firelight crouched a gigantic monstrosity, hairy and tremendous. Its bloated abdomen was barred with black and silver, the head almost hidden from sight by a yellow mop of fur, from which projected jet-black mandibles, furiously vibrating as it watched us through red, vicious eyes.

Behind those eyes, I sensed a personality, keenly intelligent. I

found myself waiting for the frightful thing to speak and was horrified at the thought. You can not credit, I know, but I who *saw* am telling you the truth. I believed then, that fearful spider was as intelligent as you or I, in a more limited way, and I can assure you it is an absolute fact that the other hideous vermin acknowledged it as their superior!

It stood at least a foot and a half high and I should judge that it would have tipped the scales at about twenty pounds. It walked about the fire at a safe distance, and carefully observed us twice from all angles. Then it moved off in a westerly direction and we saw the others draw back from in of it respectfully, leaving a broad path, down which it passed, and they closed in solidly again.

The same actions took place as on the preceding morning. Scatteringly they vanished with the dawn, leaving a few stragglers that seemed to regret the necessity that drove them off.

There was no question now about what we should do. Rather than spend another such night, we would have braved a thousand savages. About 10 o'clock in the forenoon therefore we started back, but we had gone too far. Befor we had gone a mile on our back-trail, we heard rustling in the bushes and the crepitant pattering as of many raindrops, while sometimes we could see small gray bodies bounding along beside us.

Still we pressed on. The march became a trot, and the trot a wild disorderly rout. We flung away our clothes in a mad dash for anywhere, but away! We mounted a small knoll and looked back. A sea of gray, black and red lapped around us, like an island almost level with the water, over which the waves threaten momentarily to break. Slowly from all sides they crept in, rising higher like the chill waters of death. We broke clubs from the trees and prepared to die.

Then came that horror of the night, hustling on from the west, with five companions that matched it in size. The resistless torrent that was just lapping over the crest of the knoll stopped and receded. The six came closer, scrutinized us and started back down the bank, pausing about ten feet away as though we were expected to follow.

We did! We all had the same thought at once, to kill the most hideous ones and then as many more as we could before we died. So we ran down the slope, and the man in front of me crashed his club through the largest of the six.

Instantly we were covered from head to foot with crawling insects, and as we rolled over and over, shrieking and howling with fear, feeling the spiders pop and squelch beneath our weight like ripe

plums, an acrid nauseous stench arose.

As we lay there, half dead with sich terror, I noticed that no more were on me, the masses had withdrawn, and one of the larger insects stood very close to my face, on each ebony mandible a drop of venom glistening. Perhaps it was our first visitor, but they all looked alike to me.

I jumped up. The Indians lay on a red noisome carpet of crushed bodies and we were all covered with a pulpy mess. One by one they stood up, and we discovered that not one of us had been bitten. Then the hordes opened invitingly again a westward path, and we walked down it as prisoners. The prisoners of insects!

But one stayed behind. He was the man who had destroyed the large spider. Apparently at a signal, the mass closed in about him, cutting him off from the rest of us. He tried to run to us, as they forced us down the trail, but in an instant he was a staggering bellowing heap of vermin, that tottered a few steps and went down. Before we were out of sight, his howls had become moans, and we knew what the end would be.

So with one of the great, yellow-headed brutes in the lead, one at each side of us, and two bringing up the rear, we came again to the brook, the swarms surrounding us on all sides, as thickly packed as leaves.

3.

ABOUT A mile farther on, the brook emptied into a small river. This we followed down the right-hand bank, till the middle of the afternoon, when we struck a well defined path, hard beaten by much travel.

The throng of gray spiders now began to disappear, having reached their farthest boundary, the five black and silver guards still remaining and many of the red and sable fellows. But when a short time later, the path was barred by an immense crowd of frightful monsters, similar to those that guarded us, the small spiders also returned to their own zone.

Just as dusk was falling, we marched out of the jungle into the open, and, surrounded by hundreds of silver-barred brutes, were forced down an incline into a valley. It was bare of vegetation, and in the center stood several stone buildings clustered about a larger and more pretentious edifice. These were windowless and doorless, being entered through a trap in the flat roof. They made me think of the nests of trap-door spiders.

As we neared these buildings, a jaguar, or *tigre*, as the natives term it, came racing down the valley, and behind it poured a

hideous mob that hid the ground from sight beneath a palpitant, undulating surface that made my skin crawl to watch. He staggered nearer as though he sought the protection of man, and I saw that his tongue hung out as he panted in the last throes of exhaustion. On the beast's back rode a large spider, which urged the poor animal on to death, and as they reached the nearest building, sank its poison into the beast's spine, and *El Tigre* dropped like a stone.

Now we saw a forecast of our own fate. It was plain that we had been brought to this gathering place to be butchered. Meat on the hoof, less troublesome to bring than if it were dead!

A wave of frightened animals dashed up, a chattering monkey or two, many hares, snakes that writhed in agony, half crippled by bites and dragged along by their captors, lizards that hissed with mouths wide open. The lizards were the only ones that fought.

Then from the western valley wall, another herd poured sown, a great anaconda coiling beside a cluster of peccaries closely bunched together and squealing with terror, and behind all a swarm of hunters.

Never before had I seen so many different breeds of spiders dwelling in amity with one another, and again I had the impression that these were intelligent, reasoning beings hunting together for the good of the many, and as far above the ordinary spider as the Anglo-Saxon is above the Australian Bushman.

NOW WE WERE gathered in a cluster about the stone huts, hunters and hunted, a motley crew herded from all points of the compass over a twenty-mile radius, and the spiders set up a vast clacking of mandibles and emitted little hungry yearning cries.

In answer, I heard thuds on the low roofs as the trap-doors fell back, and from each structure crawled a creature that dwarfed our captors into insignificance. It was a disgusting, heart-stopping sight, and our stomachs retched as we saw eight enormous spiders, each the size of a horse. But it was not their incredible size and filthiness, nor their bloated bodies which betokened an unthinkable age, that so horrified our souls! It was the look of an incredible, superhuman knowledge within their eyes, a knowledge not of this earth or era, a look as they saw us that might shine in the eyes of Lusifer, conscious of a kingdom or a *world* that had been gained, ruled and lost! And I knew that they looked upon us as an upstart race, born to serve, that had by a freakish accident turned the tables on our masters.

This, I say, I read in their eyes, but my memory may be

colored by the things I later *knew*.

The monsters pounced down, selecting the choicest foods before them. One seized the carcass of a deer and bore it to the roof-top, mumbling down its juices, which would soon leave it a dry mummified husk of bones and hide. Another selected a large peccary or wild pig, and a third chose a savage lizard that killed three of the black and silver guards before it was stung into helplessness.

A man was snatched from my side, shrieking as he was dragged to the roof-top and down into the building, his cries cut short by the shutting of the trap.

Then one took me by the side and I gave myself up for dead. I have read of men that have been caught by lions, clawed and bitten, but feel no pain till long after they have been rescued. So it was with me. I felt neither pain nor fear as I was borne to the roof as a mouse is carried by a cat, but only regret that I might have done so many things that now I should never live to do.

The creature dropped me upon the stone roof and inspected my clothing, which seemed to puzzle it. Then with a talon, it felt of my skin, whose whiteness I do not doubt was unfamiliar. Daintily and with exceeding care, it samk its hollow fangs into my arm and commenced the drinking of my blood. I felt no pain, only a haze before my eyes and a giddiness as I fainted.

UP FROM an unfathomable abyss of sleep I swam, cleaving my way to consciousness with mighty strokes. I opened my eyes and saw that I still lived.

I was lying on the roof with the eight horrors around me. The sun was set like a jewel, upon a mountain top, nearly at the day's close. The valley was a shambles, covered with spiders gruesomely feasting.

One seemed to be communicating with the others. He was the largest of all and appeared to be in power, so that later I dubbed him King. This was the one that had chosen me and had, curiously, not finished his meal.

Now one at a time, each came up, placed its fangs upon my wounded arm and tasted of my blood. When all had done this, there was another silent colloquy, and finally at some mysterious signal, several of the guards in silver took me off the roof, half carrying, half dragging me to another building, into which I was dropped and the door closed down.

The air inside was fresh and pure, ventilated through the cracks in the rude walls. A dim light that seeped in revealed that there were no furnishings in the room except a low dais in one corner, obviously built for one of the great

spiders, and a runway that slanted from the floor to the roof door. The interior was swathed in webs, so thickly hung that it seemed a tapestry. I tore down part of this, to admit more light, but the sun sank below the mountains.

I slept a dreamless sleep, upon the dais, getting what consolation I could from the thought that tomorrow was another day, and at any rate I was seeing things that had not been seen before.

4.

I WOKE with a start. The light of morning poured down through the open trap, but as I was considering the advisability of climbing up the runway, a large body filled the opening and backed down like a cat descending a tree. Halfway down, the spider king reversed ends and came head first, sliding down the polished slide, worn smooth by many great bodies.

I stood up, dizzy with pain of my wounded arm, which had begun to fester overnight.

The monster approached, took my arm in his mandibles and apparently observed that it was enormously swollen, for he shifted his hold and cleaned out the wound with a talon, afterward injecting something by means of his hollow mandibles. The pain lessened and in three days the swelling was gone and I was well on the road to recovery. After this natural antiseptic had commenced its work, my captor exuded a quantity of raw web material from one of his triple-jointed spinnerets, and placed the sticky mass upon my arm, where it dried and hardened.

He then stared unblinking into my eyes for several minutes, and again I had the impression of a mighty intelligence in that loathsome carcass that wished to communicate with mine. Finding that I made no response, the king urged me toward the runway by shoves, and with his assistance I managed to reach the roof and looked around me.

The day was fair. Not a living thing moved in the valley, except a few of the guards busy dragging away the skeleton of a sloth. None of my Indians were visible, but I gussed their fate. All had perished in the night, and I was the only survivor.

The carried me to water, his fangs gripped in my clothes, and I drank deeply, after which I was carried back to the hut, and dropped in like a sack of meal. About an hour later, the trap opened, and a live agouti dropped in, and the door fell.

I wondered if I was supposed to eat the little rabbitlike animal, but I wasn't hungry enough for that, so I lay down upon the dais and nursed my throbbing arm, while my fellow prisoner hid under the runway and the morning dragged along to midday.

The spider king appeared a second time and investigated my condition. When he saw that the wound was not so angrily inflamed, he eyed me gravely, with a sage air of pondering the case, for all the world like a little German doctor of my acquaintance. I almost expected to hear him say, "Ach, dot is goot!"

Again he assisted me to climb the polished slide, and upon the roof I found the other monsters. My captor set me down, with a proud air of showing off a curiosity to an interested audience, and squatted down where he could look into my eyes.

I observed that the entire eight were males and wondered whether there were others in the buildings. If so they must by frightful indeed, for the female spider is usually larger and more ferocious than her mate, and ofter uses him as food when other dainties run low in the larder.

Engrossed with such thoughts, I failed to notice at first that objects around me were growing hazy and vague in outline. It was as though gauze curtains were being lowered between me and the spiders. They dimmed until I strained my eyes to see them, then another curtain descended and the world went dark.

IT SEEMED that inside my skull the brain began to itch (I can think of no better simile), as though a light tendril of cobweb had been laid across it. Cautiously searching, the feeler groped in the convolutions of my brain, an intangible finger tickling until my skin crawled and my hair rose. Occasionally it paused with a firm pressure, and at this I saw bright flecks in the dark and heard a crackling, like an electric current leaping a spark gap. Then suddenly, connections were established, my mind and the spider's were *en rapport* and my menory was probed and read like an open book by the spider king. I felt a great loss of energy, as though my life forces were being sapped.

Of what the king learned from me, I have a very slight knowledge. In the light of later discoveries, I suppose that he obtained very concise information about the outer world, but only fragments of scenes leaked to me through the gray fog that shrouded my brain.

Once, I remember, I was reading in a picture-book, learning my alphabet under the guidance of an elder child. I had not seen or thought of that child before for years, but now her face with all its freckles was as clear before me as the book from which I read. Then the vision was wiped away and again the gray mist shut in Next I was walking the crowded streets of a city. I recognized Times Square in New York, I paused to speak to a friend that approached me; the meeting had

taken place long ago, but I wonder if you can understand this? While we were conversing, I entertained the most cannibalistic thoughts. Literally, I regretted that I had not sprung at his throat and devoured that man, and he was one of the best friends that a man has ever had. I could not conceive how I had missed such a wonderful opportunity. To roam for days in crowded cities, with wonderful food all about me and never to feast, when it could have been obtained so easily!

Again the fog closed. I realized that those thoughts had been not mine, but the spider king's.

I WAS reading in a library, reading of people. Other people walked by me, sat besides me, brought me books. Such a wealth of delicious food—in the outer world! Come! I shall go there! Never again shall I look with jaded eye upon my neighbor. He is sweet, he is dainty, he is nutritious, there is a peculiar savor about him that no other animal possesses! To the hunting grounds then, where there is meat enough for all!

But what do I say and think? All is a lie! There are no people, no libraries, no books. There is nothing but a vast sea of clouds, of spiraling vapors, in which I float, a being smaller than the atom! There is a sound of many singing, a low and melancholy chant. If I can understand the words, I shall be free. Hush! Let me listen closer. Now the song is nearer, a wild unearthly chant, and now the voices strengthen and now the words are clear! And now I *see* a vast concourse of people, with skins the hue of brass, and they float from out the mists, while out-stretched are pleading hands, hands of men, and chubby baby hands beautiful well-kept hands of young and lovely women and wrinkled, sallow hands of the very old! Hands that point me out, as I float lost in eddying vapors, hands that clench in anger, hands that plead and entreat in a language of their own, while their owners sing words quite different. All the universe seems a tangled knot of hands that twist and twine! Oh God! And all the voices sing in tones of dolor and of woe:

All the suns are impotent to succor us,
In a vast dungeon barred with evershafting rain;
When a silent people of spiders infamous
Have come to weave their filaments upon our brain.

But the knotted hands and fingers, as they squirm and tangle, command with many voices: "Avenge us! Avenge us! Vengeance!" And as I swear that I will, I break through the clinging mists and find myself upon the

stone roof in the city of spiders!

With a start, I realized that the last vision had been given to me *alone*. The spider king had no inkling of my command, or of my acceptance! How did I know this? I can not tell. I only knew with surety, that I possessed *one* secret from my jailers.

IT WAS dusk again. From the western wall began to pour the hunters, driving their prey to the slaughtering grounds. The king carried me to the hut, and dropped me in. The trap closed.

I had spent almost six hours in a trance, and I wondered what these beings had learned in that time, besides the scraps that I had retained. I felt empty, not only physically, but mentally, as though all my cherished knowledge had been brutally stolen and nothing had been put in its place. But I ran over my memories, and I seemed normal. It was a wild and uncanny experience.

Outside was a pandemonium of shrieks and howls. The roar of some gigantic animal boomed close to my hut and the wall trembled. The little agouti crept out from under the runway and cuddled its head in my lap. It was shivering in an agony of terror. I stroked it, and it shuddered violently but nudged closer.

A strident clicking like locusts outside, and then again the eery wail of a jaguar. It was filled with plaintive amazement, as though the beast could not credit what was happening to him. Ah, strike with your heavy paws, *El Tigre*, fight on, oh mighty one! The master of the jungle at last has met *his* master, and *El Tigre* roams the forest nevermore!

A long hiss, and I knew that another of the valiant lizards was taking toll amongst his butchers, but there were no more hisses, so the sequel was plain.

The dull roar of combat died away, leaving only isolated squeaks as a herd of wild pigs was brought down, somewhere in the valley. And then nothing, for when a spider dines he does so quietly and without undue disturbance.

A few minutes later, a large piece of meat was flung in. I did not inspect it too critically, but fell to at once. It was raw, of course, but I was ravenous, and a hungry man that has not eaten for nearly three days feels a surge of appetite for almost anything that seems fit for food. True, I had not killed the agouti, but I had been so feverish with my wound and the shock of my captivity that I had then no desire for food.

I slept upon the dais, until a beam of moonlight struck through a chink and lay across my eyes. I began to worry about my chances for escape, until I could no longer rest. I went to the opening, and looked out. It was a beautiful

moonlit night, the valley as far as I could see was bare. It brought a plan into my head and I tore down much of the clinging webs, until I had exposed the lower foundations of the hut. As I expected, the large boulders were filled in by small stones. I worried some of these loose, until I had opened a passageway large enough for a small man, but as I stooped to remove the last stone, the little agouti, seeing an opening to freedom, dashed past me and out upon the greensward. It had not gone ten feet from the hut, when a black and silver ghost was after it, and when it doubled to return, several more heaped themselves upon it.

Very quietly, I replaced the stones and wedged them tight; there was no hope of escape at night for me. Well, one can always sleep if his nerves are iron,

5

EACH MORNING, the spider king carried me to water, and each night I was fed. How I grew to loathe raw meat, and how I yearned for green food, milk and salt! Some nights I dreamed about salt, white mountains of it, which I walked over on snowshoes and slid down upon toboggans and skis, every once in a while reaching down and scooping up great handfuls of it which I swallowed with relish. Often I awoke, to find myself licking the palms of my hands to get what saline content I might out of the perspiration and dreaming it was salt. Even now, I season my food with salt to an extent that makes it impossible for anyone else to enjoy the meal but myself. I grew thin, but my wound healed rapidly and I had no more visions as wild as the first one.

The day after my abortive attempt to escape, my mind was probed again. In all the lucid intervals I remember, the only scenes I saw were of people. Cities that swarmed like hives, villages of people, and little isolated houses and cottages. How easy to storm one of those cottages so far from any neighbor! How easy for that horde to conquer a small village and, flushed with victory, to advance upon a city, with all the spiders in the country flocking to our standard! Perhaps even to wipe the continent clean of Man, leaving this valley and establishing a rule elsewhere!

And the night after *that* unconscious revelation, I began to suspect. I had just come from an interview with the king. As I satisfied my hunger, I tried to imagine the reasons that led him to learn of the outer world and to give me in turn glimpses of the past. For I had learned strange things, which shall be revealed in their place. Why had he sampled my blood? Had they relished the flavor, so different from the natives, and were

reserving me for an especial tidbit, *or as a guide to places where more of my kind might be found?*

Now I come to a point where I must take care not to strain your credulity to its limit, for I have things to tell that have made me a pariah in the scientific world. I am the butt for the most idiotic and asinine jokes, because I have told what I saw, bald narrative, with no fancy trimming of mine to make it more acceptable.

And this is the story of Man's rise and fall. The story of the first reasoning being upon Earth, the account of his inglorious servitude and the miraculous freak that saved you and me today from being hewers of wood and drawers of water to an insect!

I put my separate visions into short accounts as each was given to me, for each vision holds within it a fact, as each nut a kernel, and if I made a connected story of the whole it would be more incoherent than in the original form. There are blanks, but use your imagination to fill them; there may be faults of memory but there is much that tallies with the facts we know.

UPON THE third day of my imprisonment, the king held communion with me alone, the other spiders of his species remaining in their huts. Apparently having learned from me all that he wished to know or all that I could tell him, he opened a door for me to read the past.

In the scenes which follow, a word of explanation is necessary. I was granted to peep into the past, it is true, but there were bounds over which I might not trespass. Often the gray mists closed between me and some enthralling picture that I longed desperately to see more of. I participated, by proxy, in battles and was wounded, but never felt pain. I was present at scenes of the most frightful carnage, when the screams and groans of the dying and the howls of the victors must have produced a deafening din, but I heard no sounds.

Is it that the mind can not hold the memory of pain? I think so. Hark back if you will, to the time when you suffered with a sprained ankle, a broken bone or a toothache. You remember that you suffered, but the pain in all its varying degrees you can not call back to say, "At such a moment I felt *these* sensations."

But in regard to sounds, I believe that the sense of hearing in spiders is slight, and I doubt that these had ever possessed it at all.

It seemed as though I was closeted within a small compartment. I watched a panorama that unreeled before my eyes, as a motion picture operator might observe the screen from his projection booth. Then the reel would end, the lights fade and all my world became a whirling fog.

These, then, are the discoveries that I made and the facts that I learned from them, as I beheld the most marvelous drama that it has ever been given a man to witness.

I STOOD BY the shore of a stagnant lake, which was covered with a thick slimy growth that undulated with oily ripples, as though some great animal moved beneath it for there was no wind. To my right, the ground was carpeted with a lush growth of coarse vegetation over which danced a maze of insects. I saw dragonflies whose gauzy wings would measure several feet from tip to tip, whirl in mimic battle. A procession of gigantic ants near-sightedly wove their tortuous path among the thick clumps of mushrooms that studded the fern-forest like varicolored jewels embedded in a dark green plush.

Above me a dome of clouds was spread, that marched from left to right, drizzling a fine mist as they passed. No sun or moon was visible, but a soft lambent light shone through the clouds, diffused by the mist, so that the landscape was well illuminated.

A multitude of living creatures swarmed in the skies, but as far as I could see there moved no mammalian life as we know it. A thing that I took for a vulture hovering high, dropped and became on closer inspection a huge wasp, that darted down into the ferns and rose with a kicking insect in its claws, darting swiftly across the lake. All life seemed to be represented by insects!

It seemed as though I was called, although I heard no sound. I turned, to behold a like scene to that I had been watching. A stone pier projected out above the slimy liquid. From this platform a path wound into the shrubbery. This I expectantly watched, waiting for the one who had signaled to come in sight. Presently the ferns swayed and a huge bulk lumbered down to the pier.

It was an immense spider, similar in size to the king, but it was a dull brown and hairless, its skin as thick and tough as sole leather and oozing moisture. I was not surprized by the sight, for I had expected this, and I knew with the calm acceptance of the most amazing facts that we meet only in dreams, that *I* was also a spider or at least looking through the eyes of one for a time.

I understood, or rather my control understood (for this took place long, long ago), that I was to follow, and we two started along the path. Once we stopped to allow an army of ants, similar to driver ants, to cross our route. We were unseen by them, so that they passed on devouring everything that lay before them and leaving a wide swath of desolation, bare of any living thing. A short time after this, we came on a wide plain that hum-

med with activity. Spiders of all types were there hustling to and fro, herding beasts before them in small bands, toward a large stockade that was built of stone. One of these bands had stopped, and a hubbub was taking place. As we neared this commotion, I saw that these beasts were sometimes standing erect and sometimes upon all fours, and coming closer still, I beheld that their skins were white and that they were *men!*

MEN, I SAY, but not as men are now. Their faces were dull and stupid, their bodies were grossly fat, and like sheep they crowded together for mutual protection. A very few were thin and wiry, more energetic than the others and more daring. These few were leaving their own bands and were clustering about the scene of trouble, only to be forced back by a guard of small spiders like the black and silver fellows, but these guards were almost hairless, having only the yellow crest of fur that denoted their rank. There were many of the rulers, packed into a knot which disentegrated as I came up, and I saw that the center of the disturbance was a man.

Quickly the situation was explained to me, and I gathered that the slave had killed a spider. At my order, he was seized; and we returned to the lake, followed by most of the spiders and all of the men.

He was forced to walk out upon the stone pier, and as he did so the surface of the liquid began to eddy fiercely. He came nearer and the slime rose and lapped the surface of the pier. Then he turned to run back, but already the mucilaginous liquid had him thickly by the feet. Slowly it crawled up his knees, his thighs and chest, while his mouth gasped wide for air, or with a cry that I could not hear. Then the sticky slime retreated into the lake and with it went the slave.

Thus were offenders against the spider's law punished for an object-lesson to the rest!

The mob trooped back into the forest and as I marched I pondered upon my surroundings. This was clearly a younger world than mine.

An inner voice began to explain that this was a past unthinkably remote, a period of time when the equator and the temperate zones were still in a state of flux, when the equator was one roaring belt of volcanoes that belched lava and ashes into the hissing seas that rose in steam to obscure half the world in clouds. Countless eons would yet elapse before Atlantis and its sister-continent, Mu, would be raised from the oceans to breed a civilization upon each and then, to sink again, the one beneath the blue waters of the Pacific and the other in the ocean which bears its name!

But while the rest of the world was unfit for life, at the tropical

polar countries Earth was cool enough to support vegetation in abundance, and where vegetation is, creatures will be found to live upon it.

Here, as the different species commenced the race for supremacy, the insect forged ahead. The spiders being the most intelligent and, save man, the most savage, had become the dominant reasoning beings of the globe. Man, arising later, was bred for food, and his spirit broken. But now and again one rose and struck back with the results I had seen.

The voice died away, and as I marched I thought that it was something, after all, that a man dared to rebel. At any rate he was not fully conquered, and at this thought, it seemed as though I had learned my lesson from the episode, the misty clouds lowered and shrouded me in gray, and with a great roaring in my ears I passed from that era.

I STOOD UPON a mountain that overlooked a dreadful chasm. A fierce gale was sweeping along the heights and there were no clouds in the sky. Around me were grouped several of the rulers, shivering in the wind, their hides but little protection against the cold. The air was no longer warm and sticky and I knew that we were seeking a warmer climate.

To my left, at the foot of the mountain, there was a plain that was swarming with the beastmen, all converging toward the ravine, with a multitude of spiders herding them on.

Thus far we had come unhindered on our march from the cooling pole, but a mountain range across our path had barred our progress until we had discovered a way to pass through. On the other side of the range dwelt a nation of men that had never known the spiders' rule, tall and slim and of noble aspect. A budding civilization that we obliterated from existence. This nation was formed of many small cities, built of stone and wood and walled in for protection against the beasts and other men, more savage than beasts as they are at this day. They probably had some commerce with one another, some trade, some slight banding together against a common foe, but we spiders learned little of their life, for we smashed that nation and fed upon its people. But I anticipate.

There was fighting in the chasm. A small troop of brass-hued men armed with spears and slings were bitterly contesting the advance of our armies. The pass was glutted with bodies forced on by the pressure of the masses behind, who in turn were forced on by the spiders. Timid and weak as were our slaves, by their very numbers they were a power to reckon with, and though they feared the men that

held the pass, they dreaded the spiders more. Gradually they were winning through.

From our height we could see that the brass-faced defenders were striking weaker blows. They were whittling away the head of the column still, but for every man that fell, two sprang into his place. There were dead in that crowd that had been slain at the beginning of the battle and were standing erect in the press, heads idiotically lolling from side to side, unable to fall!

We moved along the mountainside, keeping the fighting beneath us. The ravine began to widen and our enemy had a greater front to cover, giving our beastmen an advantage which they speedily took.

Now came a hungry horde of spiders, swooping past me down the mountain, that flung themselves upon the weary defenders of the pass, and over their bodies the beastmen rushed in mad scramble from the monsters that crowded them on.

My band followed down the mountain wall and came finally to the new land of promise. Beyond the entrance to the pass, a walled city stood, gates barred and parapets manned with warriors that pelted our masses with stones and sleeting flights of arrows.

But while the clumsy slaves scattered on the plain, we spiders with grim resolve scaled the walls, which offered no barrier to our taloned limbs. The brass-hued men fought bravely, but we mastered them and the city was ours.

About a mile away, another city was beleaguered, and as the spiders rose along the wall, smoke began to rise from the huts within, in ever increasing abundance. The people in despair had fired their homes, in sad preference for the fiery death to the worse fate that awaited them. The grass-thatched roofs made a roaring hell of the city and the spiders were driven back.

Now farther upon the plain, another pillar of smoke began to rise, and then a third until all the cities had followed the example set by their brave countrymen, and as a nation the brass-hued race perished in the ruins of their homes.

So it was that sorrow crossed the mountains, and there was weeping and wailing in the land.

I STOOD AGAIN before the spider king, through whose memory I had searched the past, as through mine he had explored the present. The blood began to circulate through my numbed limbs, prickling like a thousand needles. I felt as though I had traveled far.

My guards carried me to the dungeon, dropped in a shoulder of venison and left me alone. I fell upon the raw meat, wolfing it down in great mouthfuls, and as I raven-

ously satisfied my hunger I tried to imagine the reasons that led the king to learn of the outer world and to give me, in turn, glimpses of the past.

Clearly, this was his method of relating his people's history, but why trouble himself at all? Why not slay me as he had the natives? I could only decide that I was being reserved for a guide to the outer world! They had relished the taste of my blood!

On pondering over the visions, I recognized the chant of the brass-hued people to be a quotation from one of the poems of Baudelaire, but in the age when those beings fought the spiders, unthinkable periods of time would yet elapse before men began to dream of rime. I eventually reached the conclusion that if I *had* seen a vision and made a promise, the impression that the pleading voices had desired to convey to me struck a chord in my subconscious mind that nearly equaled that eery verse, so that in semi-stupor I fancied they chanted in the words of the French poet. I still believe that my theory is correct, but I wonder often what they really *did* say? The vision was so very real!

I decided that each episode took place in the life of a different spider, and by the clearness of each vision, it would seem to indicate that the spider king recalled the incidents in his various reincarnations, or that lacking the written word to preserve history, this race had developed the ability of storing facts in their brain cells that were passed from one generation to another as physical attributes sometimes are with men.

In all of these glimpses, I saw as a spider; I thought as a spider; I looked upon men as beasts of burden, created for the well-being of the spider people, an unclean miserable race, but necessary for our slaves.

Thus they lifted themselves to a dangerous pinnacle, upon a foundation of sand, by depending so much upon a lower race of beings for their own existence. History is full of such errors. For look you! Your slave revolts or dies, with nothing to lose and all to gain, and if he succeeds—where are the rulers then? If he fails, progress has stopped or has been delayed, but it is the overlords that bear the expense, not the slaves. They can but die, and a dead or crippled slave is not of much value!

Steadily after the smashing of this polar race, the breed deteriorated, civilization came to a halt for ages and began to retrogress. This was the true dark age for mankind, the faint dim remembrance of which has persisted in the myth of the Garden of Eden and the driving forth of Adam and Eve, a primeval people, into the wilderness. All that saved the world today from being ruled by

spiders, is the unknown cataclysm that caused the first Ice Age, when the world grew cold and the glaciers ground down from the North. The spiders died in the cold, being a tropical race, and only those that could adapt themselves to the changing conditions, growing warm coats of hair and becoming smaller and more lively, continued to exist.

Perhaps you can imagine the antiquity of this period of change when you realize that all fossil spiders or those preserved in amber, that have yet been found are the *same* size as those we know today!

As they became smaller, some of the larger types persisted as freaks — still the rulers, but gradually losing their hold on man. Here then follows the story of the Great Migration.

6

I WAS ALLOWED to rest a day, without seeing the king, and the next morning I was brought forth and commenced the last series of visions, the first scene apparently taking place many years after the taking of the city.

A slash of purple light cleft the vapory haze and it rolled back before me, as a curtain rises at a play. I was on the roof of the central tower in the city, the sun beating down with but little warmth. It had lost a third of its former size and brilliance.

The spider through whose eyes I looked, moved nearer to the edge and stood staring out over the city. The roofs were covered with snow, a bank of heavy clouds was gathering to the left of the observatory, and the scene was dismal in the extreme. The palm trees that originally had appeared at the taking of the city were gone and in their places were gnarled, stunted willows, whose bare limbs clattered like a skeleton's arms in the wind.

Below, a procession was forming. A new breed of spiders had arisen. Half the size of the conquerors, they were covered thickly with hair. Their faces, which were turned toward my tower as though in expectancy, portrayed the savageness of fiends. Scattered thinly amongst the multitude were larger spiders of the ancient type, either throwbacks or survivals of the original rulers.

Here and there sat bands of men, lowbrowed, hair and brutalized. To such had the human race retrogressed! There were beasts of burden (and these also were men) that tottered beneath their loads of coarse vegetation intended for their own sustenance on the march. For this was an emigration to seek a warmer climate, and the city was being deserted.

Climbing up the sheer wall came a large spider, as large as myself, that stood beside me in silent com-

munion of minds. I gathered the impression that all was ready and they waited only for me. I followed my friend into the street. My control shivered and I knew it was bitter cold. We took places at the head of the column and commenced the hegira. At the city gates we stopped and looked back for the last time.

The clouds covered the sky, the city was drab and deserted; we must have been the last or nearly the last expedition to leave. A white flake floated by my eyes, the pinnacles of the tower were dull as lead: I swung into my stride, the slaves lurched on.

Man and his Master were on the march! And over all the snow was gently falling.

IT WAS NIGHT. Over my head the stars gleamed resplendent. Countless eons had passed, for the sky showed familiar forms. The pole star was the one we have always known, but in a former vision it had not been Polaris!

I was some form of sentry, for I was walking a regular beat around a natural valley, accompanied by a troop of guards. All along my path slept the great spiders, who still wielded the whip of power.

In the valley were penned a savage tribe of men, short, hairy and bandy-legged, whose language was composed mainly of signs and horrid grimaces.

I knew that our control was slipping, for it was against these that I guarded my comrades' sleep. The day before, the slaves had arisen and fled to the forests, many escaping from the horde of small spiders that had pursued them. Several of the rulers had perished in the fight, and we decided to move again.

This was the last watch. Soon the horizon flushed ruddy with the rising sun and the business of the day began.

From the thickets came all that were left of the gigantic spiders. We allowed the guard to release the slaves, and after they had gathered their possessions we traveled along the sandy shore. The spiders kept to the rear as the men shambled along, heads swinging from side to side as they peered for signs of game in the sand. Ice floes drifted in the billows, grinding against the cliffs that we were nearing.

Suddenly the men sniffed like dogs as they caught a scent, and we saw great tracks in the sand. They started off in a wide circle that finally led us to the foot of a tremendous glacier, where our game turned to face us. It was a hairy mammoth, his tusks curving like hoops, the points a little below the eyes.

The men surged about him throwing spears and stones, and a multitude of small spiders swarmed over him until the great beast was a heap of vermin and his sides ran

blood. Like a falling mountain he crashed to earth, raining spiders that leaped for safety, and we rulers, careful as usual of ourselves, advanced to the feast.

As from a distance we watched the smaller spiders feasting, and the slaves resting near the glacier cliff on the thin strip of beach that separated them from the sea, suddenly a lump of ice dropped, splintering from the sky, and following with quick descent came others! Then between us and the men roared an avalanche of ice boulders, raising a barrier unclimbable.

WE DASHED, scattering, to the land, and behind us the beach was black with spiders, pouring a mighty river, racing for life before the advancing glacier, grinding the rocks to powder beneath it as a fissure rent it along a mile-long front!

And as we looked back, we saw that long quiet torrent of ice in motion at last, for as a shot or a whoop is sufficient to start an avalanche of snow in menacing charge and men frown upon one who whistles or sings beneath a snowy slope of the Alps, so the titanic thud of the mammoth's fall, the earth-shaking crash of his sudden death, had startled the glacier into nervous leap. And now, separated from the parent body of ice, the mighty cliff towered toppling toward the sea and moved, ponderously staggering like a drunken world, crowding the slaves and pounding thinner the ribbon.

The men panted, so far behind us as we gained the outside rim, that they were cut off. Madly they tore back and forth along the ever-narrowing beach, some swimming in the icy water, some falling upon their spears in superstitious dread of the devils of the sea, whose fins cut the waves as they feasted on the bodies of our slaves. Then the glacier moved inevitably on, entered the water, and the face thundered down with a splash that sent a wave lapping against our feet.

Titanic icebergs floated in the tossing sea, monuments to the last of our slaves that marked the resting place of the remnants of the brass-hued race.

No more slaves! No more civilization for the spiders! Hereafter we would hunt our own food, fight our own battles, build our own shelters, becoming more savage and more tiny with the years, until we were tolerated parasites in the palaces of men! Our destiny was that we should clear the filth and pests from the homes of an upstart, minor, inferior race of men, but still that time was far in the future.

THEN FOLLOWED many snapshots of the past, so that I followed in quick glimpses the fate of that wandering, deteriorating

band of spiders whose ancestors had conquered a world.

Driven by the ever-advancing cold, they traveled south, deserted always by bands that stayed behind while the main body kept on. Always it was the smallest that lagged behind, the fiercest, the ugliest, the least intelligent! It is their progeny that spins the webs in forest, farm and field and in the end comes to inherit the proudest edifices of humanity.

As the years were left behind us, our numbers decreased, until from millions we had become thousands, our rulers could be numbered by hundreds. From time to time we met other bands some with slaves, but most without. Often we fought with these, for the years had made such differences in the species that we could no longer understand our fellow invaders. We saw brutal tribes of men, armed with stone hatchets and clubs, who gave us a wide berth. These were not the descendants of the polar race, but had evolved separately. We saw others, yet to evolve, and great apes, semi-arboreal, that were beginning to learn the possibilities that lay in the human thumb for grasping tools.

But we passed on, our numbers dwindling ever, skirted volcanoes that thundered at us and slew many, fought through the terrible storms of that time, smashed by the pitiless hail, buried by avalanches, and at last found peace, those that were left of us, in the primeval jungles, where no glaciers could ever reach; and here we made a home. We built houses with the aid of savages that roamed where we had determined to settle, and fed upon their bodies afterward. We established the rings of different species of spiders about our central community and about a hundred of our rulers, all that remained to carry on the race.

And here in the heart of the steaming forests we dwelt, no more of our progeny being born, for our age was great, but as our numbers decreased by natural deaths and and the years gave us an infernal cunning our ambition rose to the point where we had almost decided to move again. But what lay outside our home? That was the question which gave us pause. Should we again brave the crunching glaciers and the bellowing volcanoes?

But if the glaciers had fought the volcanoes and had been destroyed, then perhaps there were men again. Not the tough and unsavory savages that our hunters sometimes brought in, but large, fat and toothsome light-colored brutes that we could again rear in herds!

And perhaps with the new food would be found other of our race, so that with their strength and our cunning, cent uries in development, we should win to undreamed-of heights, as under our crafty leader-

ship our smaller spiders, less intelligent than their forebears, conquered for *us* a world!

At the next glimpse, there were only sixty or seventy of the rulers, the males predominating; and as the years went on, this little band became less until at my last vision I opened the trap of my hut and only seven of my fellows were to be seen on their roofs, as we watched a herd of animals gathered for the evening feast, among them being brown naked men and a peculiar white-faced man, covered with a strange hide, the like of which I had never seen before, and whom I intended to dine upon!

I, Jabez Pentreat, looked out through the eyes of the spider king and saw *myself* standing as I remembered I had stood, days before, as I had waited for the great spiders to pounce down from the roofs, and at this unbelievable sight, the curtain of gauze shut down and I realized I was at the end of the road! This is the only proof I have that my story is true.

7

THREE DAYS later, being fully cured of my would, I was again brought from the prison. The spiders were waiting. The valley was acrawl with vermin, whose dry rustling filled the air with whispers. Yellow-headed guards surrounded the huts, gray devils mingled with the scarlet-barred insects, huge black leaping tarantulas were present in great numbers, but in all the crowd I saw not a single insect whose bite is not poisonous to man.

The spider king in his silent communication made it understood to me that my life depended upon my ability to guide them to the nearest community of whites, and I consented readily. Who would not have done the same? I intended to lead them to the river and take my chances of escape there, knowing that they were as careful as cats about entering water, for although the king had promised me my life, I had but little faith in the promise.

So on the eighth day of my captivity we set out to the conquering of an unsuspecting continent. I walked in the center of the huge rulers' formation. About us rustled an imposing troop of guards, and for miles on each side of the forest was filled with our myrmidons, scattered far and wide.

How I feasted on fruit, that day! As we passed the small brook at *tambo* number 10, I caught some small fish and ate them raw, and no epicure ever tasted anything more delicious than that meal was to me. The drums growled again that night, as I lay in the midst of the lightly sleeping horde, that quivered angrily at my slightest movement.

It took me, urged on by the spiders, only seven days to cover the distance that I had taken ten to accomplish coming in.

Toward night we bagan to hear the roar of the Caroni River as it struggled through a *raudal,* or rapid, on its way to the Orinoco.

Suddenly, about a mile ahead, there burst out a pandemonium of frightful screams that I recognized as humans voicing inhuman terror. The great brutes scuttled on faster, so that I was hard put to keep my place. Clouds of smoke rolled up ahead of us from a campfire, and presently we broke out of the forest and saw the flames. A tribe of ugly natives were trapped by the river, where they had made camp in a clearing, building their fire on a sandy spot. Around them, the tall reedlike grass, shoulder-high to a tall man, waved and shuddered and bent low with the rush of the spider army.

The men had been surrounded and held until the arrival of the king, and as we came up I recognized their paint and tribal marks to be those of the Guaharibo Indians, savage men who slay for the love of murder and who had roved from their home near the upper reaches of the Orinoco, searching for heads and loot.

Many heads hung in the smoke, partly cured .—and several of them were white! At this sight, something turned to steel with me, and had it been possible to save them, I would not if I could.

I said to the king, "These are the first." He understood my meaning if not my words, and gave the signal for the attack.

A GREAT WAVE of spiders broke over the savages, clicking their battle cry, leaping from one to another, darting through the smoke. Seized with the madness of slaughter, the spider king and his fellows, to whom this was a joy they had probably been long without, charged with the rest.

In a second, I was forgotten and absolutely alone! Dazed by the marvel of it, I was yet not too blind to seize my opportunity. Quickly, yet with the utmost care, I crept toward the river where the log canoes were drawn up on the shore and pushed all off but one. Still the battle raged.

As I put one foot inside the canoe, something gave me pause. Again I heard the despairing, pleading cries of the brass-faced people and saw those writhing hands that swore me to vengeance. Stealthily I crawled back to the fire, gathered an armful of resinous, light wood, and with a burning brand trailing behind me set the grass aflame as I ran to the canoe.

I paddled upstream to where the forest joined the clearing and beached the canoe. The wind was blowing strongly downstream. With my torch, I lit stick after stick

and hurled the flaming wood far out into the field. Then I drifted down and held my position in midstream and waited.

The battle was almost to its inevitable end. The fire that I had first lit was burning stubbornly into the teeth of the wind, and now, fanned to fury, a fifteen foot wall of flame came down with a whirring roar to meet it!

The fighting stopped. Man and spider, both were doomed, and from both sides the fire closed in. I yelled in joy, howling crazy, broken curses. Strange how much it looked like a great city in the smoke, with flaming, sputtering sheets of fire that lapped its phantom walls! From that whirlwind of sparks came a vast sound of frying! I heard a bursting mutter like gigantic kernels of corn popping in an enormous pan. A wave of sooty smoke, redolent of burned flesh, rolled out over the river and set me blind and coughing. As I wiped my streaming eyes, a horrid *thing* staggered from the flames, little spikes of fire shooting from its fat and bloated body! Although his hair was burned away and his mandibles were gone, I recognized the spider king. He lurched nearer and I saw that he was blind, just as his charred legs snapped with his weight and he subsided into the river.

The water boiled and hissed when he struck it. Once he rose, lashing feebly, and I beheld that his body was swarming with little fish that rent and tore pieces of flesh away. These were the savage ittle piranhas, the minature freshwater sharks that give short shrift to anything that falls within a school of them. Again he came to the surface, the water frothed a bloody foam and then the last of the monster sank, in tatters, into the Caroni!

Not many of the others escaped; after the fire had swept into the forrest I saw that the ground was black with charred bodies, that lay in tumbled heaps around the skeletons of the Guaharibos. By easy stages, I made my way to civilization, bearing a stupendous tale to my friends.

I told them my story and said in substance, "While you have been wasting your time for hundreds of years, searching back through the ages; with pick and shovel scrabbling in the dust of forgotten empires; with arduous sifting of myths and legends to find some small fact; with titanic efforts of geological, biological and philological research to bring the past nearer, the link that could tell you all you wish to know — is hunting flies in the rafters of your own houses! Apply yourselves therefore to the means of wresting this secret from it, for you can learn both of this and other lands more than by your explorations."

They laughed as I expected they would.

AS HE finished, we were passing into Waltham and we began locating our luggage, for we had only a few more miles to travel. Then as the train neared Boston, he resumed at the original cause of our discussion upon the word "hate" of uncertain usage.

"So while you feel repulsion," he began, "and a sickened disgust at the sight of a spider, it is because the hereditary, subconscious memory **knows** that these creatures were once your lords in another existence and it commands you to obliterate this loathsome, alien life from another age. When you crushed that barn spider under your foot, you unconsciously took revenge for uncounted eras of oppression, that has made such a mark on the human brain that forever and ever most mn will sicken at the sight of a spider.

"You are repelled without understanding the reason for your dislike, but I—I **hate** them, for I know **what** they are—a fact which no other man alive is certain of.

"All spiders that I come in contact with now, are attracted to me. I enter a room, for instance; there is not the sigh of a web about, my hostess would swear that the house is spotless, but if there is a spider it feels my presence somehow, and before I leave, I may find one

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perched upon my shoe, or near me, steadily gazing with its beady black eyes.

"I hate them, but I have not the fear, which you mistakenly call hatred. I am going to search for Carewe and **we** will search for that polar country where the brass-hued men lived, and may even find a frozen or fossil spider that will prove that I did not lie to my fellow scientists. But until that day, I tell my story to no more scoffers, nor should I have told you if I had not wished to see how a layman received the theory that all my contemporaries have rejected.

"What, Boston so soon?" he ejaculated as we pulled into the North Station. "I hope I have not bored you."

"Indeed, you have not, Mr. Pentreat," I answered, with a smile. "I wish you good fortune in your search." And I extended my hand.

"Thank you, I shall need it," he said gruffly, and wringing my hand, he stepped into the crowd and I saw my last of the man with the beady eyes.

I SHALL not include this in my novel, nor shall I change his version of affairs. It is an amazing theory at least, and if it were proved, it would cause havoc to cherished opinions, but if he goes to find his lost city in the North, he goes alone—for I read that Sir Adlington Carewe has disappeared into the jungles of Africa's West Coast, and as his experiments dealt with great apes, I do not think he will be back.

Well you have read the story. I give you fair warning that I don't believe it myself. His eyes were just a wee bit too bright!

Bound To Be Read

MASTERPIECES OF SCIENCE FICTION

Edited by *Sam Moskowitz*

The World Publishing Company, 2231 West 110th Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44102; 1966; 552 pages, including 26 page introduction by the editor; $6.50.

This is a companion volume to the earlier *Explorers of the Infinite*, by Sam Moskowitz, wherein the author discusses the work and influence of eighteen authors, all but one of whom were either known before March 1926, when the first issue of *AMAZING STORIES* appeared (dated April), or became known after that date for work appearing outside the pages of science fiction magazines. It ranges from the 17th century, starting with the real Cyrano de Bergerac and his book, *Voyage to the Moon*, to Stanley G. Weinbaum, the single author who became known through appearances in the science fiction magazines alone, and whose work appeared nowhere else during his lifetime (he died in mid-December 1935). In the present book, we have a representative selection from each of the eighteen; and with this volume, Moskowitz has completed his four-volume series, the other two volumes being *Seekers of Tomorrow* (studies of modern science fiction authors) and *Modern Masterpieces of Science Fiction* (a similar representative selection). The contents are as follows.

Voyage to the Moon, by Cyrano de Bergerac. The editor tells us, "A second English translation, that of A. Lovell, appeared in 1867 . . . and is the most widely quoted from. Lovell was very faithful to the orginal French and most completely caught the flavor of de Bergerac's style . . ."

"The condensation that follows has been adapted from the Doubleday and McClure edition." (This was based upon Lovell, and compared with the French edition of 1661; very little of Lovell's work was changed, outside of long paragraphs being broken up and changes in punctuation required for clearness.) Of the present condensation, Moskowitz continues: "Without altering a single word of Lovell's translation, a complete short story has been put together. Some further changes were made in the punctuation for clarity. The emphasis has been on the scientific invention of the story, including the moon flight sequences, the technological aspects of the lunar civilization and the return trip home, with just enough of the satiric element retained to impart the flavor of the work."

The Mortal Immortal by Mary

Wollonstonecraft Shelley, ". . . provides evidence that science fiction was not a single accident as far as Mary Shelley was concerned, but a format that she returned to each time she found it best suited to her message". This is a complete short story, which was first published in 1834.

Hans Phaall—A Tale, by Edgar Allan Poe first appeared in 1835, in *THE SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER;* and what Moskowitz has done that is special is to append two of Poe's later essays relating to the story. Three weeks after Poe's story first appeared *THE NEW YORK SUN* (then a daily newspaper) began to run what it termed a news-story "Great Astronomical Discoveries, Lately Made by Sir John Herschel, LL.D., F.R.S., etc., at the Cape of Good Hope", starting in the August 25, 1835 edition. This was the notorious *Moon Hoax*, by Richard Locke, one of the most successful hoaxes of the period—a period in which such activities were regarded as good sport, and fame rather than infamy attended the perpetrator, particularly if he confessed voluntarily as Locke did. Poe later wrote *A Note on Hans Phaall*, wherein he discusses both the flaws in Locke's *Moon Hoax* and his own reading of imaginary voyages to other worlds. This was appended to the story when it was first put in book form, but I have never seen it in any edition of Poe's works which included the story. Still later, Poe wrote an essay on Richard Locke, further discussing both stories. These two essays are appended to Poe's story here and it is the first time that all three have appeared in a science fiction anthology; it may be the first time that all three have been run together, too—the editor is silent on this point, however.

"The Wondersmith", by Fitz-James O'Brien first appeared in *THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY*, for October 1859. Moskowitz acknowledges that the tale is a borderline story, calling it the closest thing to fantasy in the volume. His reason for using it is that, despite the magical means involved, once this is done, the author has achieved rather astonishing pioneer work in imagining the basic elements of the robot story, as they would appear later in science fiction.

I am somewhat dubious about this choice, as I am dubious about condensing a novel into a short story; but having read *The Wondersmith* several times before, I have no doubt that it is worth reprinting. With the de Bergerac it would be necessary to read both the condensation and the complete Lovell edition in order to assess the value of the condensation, a project which time has not allowed me to undertake.

Jules Verne is represented by *The Eternal Adam*, written shortly before his death in 1905. The text represents the only translation into English, undertaken by Willis T. Bradly in the late 50's and published in the March 1957 issue of *SATURN*, edited by Donald A. Wollheim.

Edward Everett Hale wrote two stories dealing with an Earth satellite, and apparently was the very first not only to treat with the subject in fiction but to mention it at all. *The Brick Moon* ran in three installments in the *ATLANTIC MONTHLY*, October, November, and December 1869; a short sequel, *Life*

in the Brick Moon, appeared in the February, 1870 issue of the same magazine. The two stories have not appeared between hard covers since 1899; they are here under the title of the first tale, and the editor notes where the second begins and refers to the transitional paragraphs that Hale added when they were run together previously.

Lost in a Comet's Tail, or Frank Reade, Jr's Strange Adventure with His New Airship, by Luis P. Senarens is from the *FRANK READE LIBRARY.* It has been condensed from 25,000 " . . . to about 10,000 words, all entirely the author's, with the greatest amount of material on the more fascinating space aspects." Senarens' work appeared under the alias of "Noname".

You may think that H. G. Wells's *The Country of the Blind* is surely far too well-known and generally accessible to justify republication here, but Moskowitz offers what, to me, is the prime surprise of the book. In the late 30's, Wells looked back over some of his early short stories and " . . . decided to show what a more mature writer could do in upgrading from his earlier years." A very limited edition appeared in 1939, containing the original 1904 version of the story (the one which appears in the collected short stories and other editions, collections, anthologies, etc.), and the revised edition wherein the ending was entirely rewritten; and a 1600 word introduction to the new version, which is 3000 words longer than the original. I have read both and can find no difference worth mentioning in the two prior to the revised, 3,000 word ending, which makes quite a different story; both are very fine indeed, and I see no reason for choosing between them when it is possible to have both. Moskowitz also reprints the introduction, which is a most interesting little essay in itself.

"*The Place of Pain,* by M. P. Shiel has been anthologized in several horror anthologies, and last appeared in Number 16 (1951) of the *AVON FANTASY READER. The Los Amigos Fiasco* is an example of both A. Conan Doyle's science fiction and his humor, and is a rarety, never having appeared in a science fiction anthology before. Also rare is *The Resurrection of Jimber-Jaw,* by Edgar Rice Burroughs, who wrote very little fiction shorter than book length. This one appeared in the February 20, 1937 issue of *ARGOSY,* and has never been anthologized before.

A. Merritt's *The People of the Pit* is one of his finest short stories; and although it has been reprinted in various places before, I agree that it is the most suitable short Merritt tale for a science-fiction anthology, even though *The Last Poet and The Robots* could qualify and I believe is harder to find. Almost completely unknown, however is *System,* by Josef and Karel Capek.

Re-reading his editorials in the old issues of *AMAZING STORIES* and *WONDER STORIES* today confirms my respect for Hugo Gernsback as a remarkably concise and lucid writer upon scientific subjects. His fiction is seldom a pleasure to read, though a few of the humorous tales are bearable. Would that more non-talents, so far as fiction goes, had Gerns-

back's virtue of brevity! The present exhibit, *Extra Sensory Perfection,* is among the better ones.

It is said that an author can seldom judge his own work well, and we often find that an author's favorite does not seem to be his best or, sometimes, even close to it. However, there are exceptions, and H. P. Lovecraft, in liking his short story, *The Colour of out Space* above all his other fiction, showed very good judgment indeed. And there can be little doubt that it is the best among his short stories which could be considered science fiction.

With Olaf Stapledon, who wrote no short stories at all, there could be little choice except to present a chapter from a work such as *Last and First Men* or *The Star Maker,* which can stand by itself, more or less, as neither work is a novel. Moskowitz has selected the chapter "Humanity on Venus", from the first of the two books mentioned above.

Philip Wylie's *Jungle Journey* had its first appearance in the December 1958 issue of *JACK LONDON'S ADVENTURE MAGAZINE,* one of numerous short-lived publications built around the name of some well-known author; it has not appeared in hard covers before.

"Of the stories in this volume," writes the editor in his preliminary notes to *The Lotus Eaters,* by Stanley G. Weinbaum, "this is one of but two that have previously been collected in a science fiction anthology . . . " He goes on to explain why he decided to abandon the attempt to bring out a 100% "new" anthology while yet within grasp of his goal. While I feel that either the previously-unanthologized *Pygmalion's Spectacles* or *The Circle of Zero* could have qualified, I have nothing against the present selection. And since Sam would have had to run a considerably less fine short story by H. P. Lovecraft to attain his goal, I have nothing but praise for his graceful withdrawal from it rather than choosing something he honestly considered inferior to the story he did select.

$6.50 is a lot of money, but this is a lot of book — a great deal more than can be said of many volumes for which the same amount or more is asked. Of the contents, I have previously read only the stories by Poe, O'Brien, Merritt, Lovecraft, and Winebaum — which, combined do not subtract greatly from the number of previously-unread pages, to say nothing of the fact that a very large percentage of the volume is effectively unavailable to me elsewhere. I do not expect to appreciate all of the contents herein that I haven't yet read; but the introduction, the notes, the Wells revision, the essays by Wells and Poe — these alone would tempt me to lay cash on the line for the book.

Sam Moskowitz has finally found a publisher who will let him do anthologies his own way; and when it comes to research into a little-known or little available areas of science fiction for hard-cover presentation, the Moskowitz way is, for me, a very good one. Whether someone else might have done it better is not worth arguing about, since the point is that if Sam hadn't done it, I do not think that it would have been done at all. Highly recommended. RAWL

THREE STORIES
by Murray Leinster, Jack Williamson, and John Wyndham
Introduction by *Sam Moskowitz*
Doubleday Science Fiction, Doubleday & Company, Inc.; 1967; 184 pp., including 18 page introduction; $3.95.

When I opened this volume, I cursed Sam Moskowitz with a mighty curse, for the first thing I noticed was that the Jack Williamson story here is *The Moon Era*—a tale which I was just about to see if I might obtain for *FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION*. Upon recovering from this shock, somewhat less vigorous curses followed my noting the titles of the Leinster and Wyndham stories, *The Mole Pirate* and *Exiles on Asperus;* I'd thought of these, too, as "future possibilities", but wasn't even close to the point of taking action on them. Sam, you may be sure, was entirely amused when I recovered sufficiently to pick up the telephone and translate my feelings into coherent English.

And why not? I could hardly say that these are poor stories under the circumstances, could I?

I could, theoretically, but I won't. Let other foxes dogmatize on grapes. No, these are enjoyable stories, and the introduction is particularly good—I stress that, because I'd recently read two other, much longer, introductions by him, dealing with much the same subject; I expected to find a well-done, but, to me, rather stale essay, for which I would not blame the author at all. There's just so many different ways you can say the same thing when you have to say it again and again and again.

Well, it's true that there are—but Sam hasn't come to his limits yet. *The Sense of Wonder*, his essay in this book, has a feeling of freshness about it. I would say also that the three stories, which were selected to illustrate this element, are effective for that purpose as well as being enjoyable by themselves. Not great literature, not "significant" (except for the Wyndham, which is far better wirtten and thought out than most of the magazine science fiction of that period—1932—and handles its theme excellently) but fun to read.

Is it worth a little more than half the price of the anthology listed above? That depends upon how much you want to read these three stories—which you would not be able to find otherwise for anything like the price. That is, I do not think you could obtain the February 1932 issue of *WONDER STORIES* (for *The Moon Era*), the Winter 1933 issue of *WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY* (for *Exiles on Asperus*) and the November 1934 issue of *ASTOUNDING STORIES* (for *The Mole Pirate*) for much less than ten times the price; in which case you wouldn't get Moskowitz's introduction, though you would get such items as Edmond Hamilton's *A Conquest of Two Worlds* and Don A. Stuart's *Twilight* in their original printings. It's no fault of Sam's that *Three Stories* is over-priced, but I have to say I think this is the case.
RAWL

Down To Earth

A number of readers have urged that the editorial be listed on the preference page. I'm dubious about this, and it isn't either modesty or diffidence, but the feeling that articles cannot really compete justly with fiction. In an all-article magazine like *EXPLORING THE UNKNOWN*, it's a different matter, and I do not hesitate to put the editorial up for cheers or hisses. However, if you want to vote on it, I'm willing; so the question appears on this issue's preference coupon and I'll take whichever course that a plurality of votes received indicates.

Speaking about the editor's thoughts, *David Charles Paskow* writes: "It's refreshing to read an editorial in a science fiction magazine regarding science fiction. When *FUTURE* and *SCIENCE FICTION STORIES* folded, whenever I read an editorial in an sf magazine, it read like a *science news* bit. FSF is a reprint magazine, so why not reprint your *Yesterday's World of Tomorrow* series? I realize that fiction is your prime concern, but maybe others would be interested in seeing the series reprinted."

It's gratifying that so many want to read the editor's essays, but for that very reason I feel that new, rather than old exhibits, should be offered. Despite my hopes of bringing you, in each issue, a fair percentage of stories you have never read before (or at least stories you have not seen for many years), there is always the possibility of this particular issue's containing material which is nearly all familiar to *you*—although not necessarily to thousands of others. And what if this were topped off by an editorial, however worthy, that you had read before and perhaps still have in your collection? The series you mention isn't much more than ten years old; and even if it is outstandingly good (something I cannot judge) one doesn't become a classic in a decade!

If many readers would like to see these old editorials reprinted, they might try to persuade some publisher like Advent Press to bring them out under hard covers; meanwhile, I'd much rather share current thoughts with you, in editorials (which will be about science fiction, etc., I promise, because I do not know enough about science to discuss science news bits) than reiterate the old ones, even if some of them are apparently safer, having made solid hits. I want to cherish my present illusion that what I say now, representing a few more traces of wisdom, is of more interest than what I was saying in the 50's.

Robert S. Martin writes: "In an old *AMAZING* from the late 1920's I once found a story (sorry I can't remember the exact title nor date of the issue) by A. Hyatt Verill which now is so obsoleted by events it would be a museum piece, for chuckles.

"The title probably contained the name of its chief character, "Fenemeno Mentiroso" (Spanish for "phenomenal lying"), who invented a "machine" (it *couldn't* be an "airplane", because it traveled at speeds greater than *one thousand miles an hour*—impossible!). By wonderful false logic and a distortion of facts, the Latin scientist proved that one could go forward in time by going faster than the rotation of Earth.

"Incidentally, I found a book in a second-hand store by Verrill: *Old Civilizations of the New World.* He mentions 'many years of field work in ethnology and archaeology for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, of New York City.'"

Fenemeno Mentiroso means "Phenomenal *Liar*", not lying. The story was *The Astounding Discoveries of Professor Mentiroso,* and it appeared in the November 1927 issue of *AMAZING STORIES.* It was written as a spoof, and Hugo Gernsback published it with a straight face, as he sometimes did with a story of this type, just to see if his readers could tell what was wrong with it.

While the publisher of *AMAZING STORIES* graciously consented to our use of Dr. Keller's *The White City,* which we ran in our Spring (#2) issue, we do not feel it right to draw upon this source further, since so many more are open to us; thus you are not likely to see any further old tales in this magazine which had their *first* appearance in *AMAZING STORIES* or *AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY, FANTASTIC,* etc. We would suggest, if you want to see a revival of the Verrill stories, that you make your nominations to those magazines.

Gene D'Orsogna writes: "I found issue #2 of FSF on a par with issue #1. The Hamilton story failed to hold my interest. Some of his early stories, notably *The Comet Doom,* were spellbinding in every sense of the word, but this piece, as I have said, left me cold. Manning's *Seeds From Space* rather surprised me. I expected a heavy-handed predecessor to *The Day of the Triffids,* but the author's easy, quasi tongue-in-cheek style was divertingly different. The late Dr. Keller's yarn was the major disappointment of the issue. His usual 'human' style was present, but I got the impression he was trying to imitate Hamilton *(i.e.* dreadful destruction faces Earth; Joe Doakes saves Earth, etc.). As to the future, stay *away* from the terrible outdated tales of the likes of Homer Eon Flint and Austin Hall. I would very much like to see more of Dr. Keller, and especially would like to see *Plane People,* by Wallace West, and *The Fountain,* by Nelson Bond.

Dr. Keller remains mildly controversial, which must please him if he cares greatly about how present-day readers feel about him now; yet, the interesting fact is that *The White City* is one of the two stories in our second issue which no one who wrote in positively disliked. (The other was

Dust, by Wallace West.) You are one of two who positively disliked *The Moon Menace* but over 50% of the respondents rated it as either outstanding or first place. We suspect that Mr. Manning's first interest was in writing a logically worked-out story, but that he also took advantage of the situation to take a dig at the heroic type of world-menace tale which was so prevalent in those days, and seldom as well done as Hamilton did it.

Herbert E. Beach writes: "Most of the memorable stories that stick in my mind from the older magazines were of at least novelet length, and I must confess that I do prefer the longer type story. I realize that you wish to have a balanced contents page, with as many good items as you can squeeze into your 130 pages; but mark down my preference for longer stories in place of shorts wherever possible. This definitely holds true for any new material that you may purchase; I probably would have rated George H. Smith's story higher in issue #1 if it had been more than just a skeleton. I certainly would have preferred a longer Smith story and forgotten completely about the Holly story, which was telegraphed all the way."

One thing I remember vividly from the old days, when I was a reader among other readers, frequently writing in to find fault with this or that stories, was that when the editor replied to our letters, it was usually to prove that he was right and we were wrong. T. O'Conor Sloane used to do this in such a gracious way that it was hard to resent it, but just the same, the aura of Infallibility did seem to hover over the editorial comments in the letter department.

Of course, I still thought I was right in my complaints; and if there was anything to that, then there must be something, at least, to reader's criticisms now that positions have been reversed. So I don't feel Infallible—but I do feel that the Smith story would have lost impact by expansion, and that the "telegraphing" in the Holly story was unimportant, since I did not consider it "surprise ending" one-punch tale. If any reader *was* taken by surprise, all right; that could happen with almost any story. But it seemed to me that the point was what the people in the story did not see, and the consequences of their blindness, irrespective of whether the reader caught on or not. This, I believe, is something entirely different from the trick-ending story, which usually has nothing else to say.

Nick Grimshaw writes: "The two covers you've used for FSF are the best on all your magazines, so far. I rate *The Moon Menace* and *Rimghost* as number one, because they were both very good, and a contrast in a way to the old and the new. *Dust* (which our reader rated outstanding RAWL) was everything you claimed and more."

Syl Robbins writes: "I picked up an issue of last month's *FAMOUS SCIENCE FICTION* and did I ever like it! . . .

"In reference to this issue's stories, the best was *The Moon Menace* by Edmond Hamilton. It was exciting and so much like stories by Otis

Adelbert Kline and Ray Cummings, which are two of my favorites in science fiction.

"Next up the ladder was *Dust*, by Wallace West. It was almost frightening. I enjoyed it very much and want to see some more by him. I rated *The White City* next in line. It was rather boring at first, but grew very exciting when the snow started to fall. Johnson is a strong character and is uncanny!

"The second to last was *Seeds From Space*. I hope you have some more novellets by Laurence Manning, for his talent is fabulous. It *was* rather far out, but I enjoyed it just the same.

"*Ringhost* was horrid. Before I had passed the first page, I put the magazine down. Let's not see any more of this type ever again."

If I heeded every reader who finds a particular type of story "horrid"—even if he reads the particular example through rather than giving up after a page or so—it would not be long before we had to fold up the magazine because there was no type of science fiction and no science fiction author, we could publish without giving someone offense.

The only thing I can do is to try to maintain a sense of proportion and to offer more of the type of stories that the largest number of you find to your liking—but not to the positive exclusion of every other type. So while I hope that you won't find any future stories in FSF quite so "horrid", we cannot make any money-back guarantees. The only thing I draw the line at is running a story which I myself consider

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"horrid" (on the grounds that doubtless some readers will like it). If a story I thought excellent is mostly greeted with hisses, then that suggests that I was in error, or at least misfortunate; but if a story I thought really bad, and published nonetheless, is roundly condemned, then I'm an idiot. Seeing that perfection is not mine, I cannot always evade error or misfortune—but I do hope to avoid idiocy! RAWL

Science Fiction As Delight

(Continued from page 5)

it is too late to make any revisions in this article—and I may in any event. Too bad, but we live in time, measured out; there are deadlines; and perfection wouldn't be mine even if I spent the rest of my days on this essay. So right now, I'm settling for these six ingredients; *Invention, Suspense, Characterization, Surprise, Richness,* and *Reward.* To consider each one briefly, in order:

Invention in science fiction amounts to something like that "sense of wonder" of which Sam Moskowitz speaks so often. It involves specific themes, scientific discoveries and imaginary mechanical inventions on the part of the author—either seemingly new inventions or adaptions and variations of devices we already have; it includes the detailed descriptions of other worlds; other peoples (humanoid or otherwise); social orders and customs; exploration of secondary etc., results of inventions or social changes, etc.; cosmologies; philosophies; religions; and so on. Obviously no one story needs each and every one of these specifics, but a science fiction tale without invention is not likely to be effective. And, in fact, poverty of invention seems to me to have been the most significant failure of a very large percentage of science fiction particularly in the past decade and a half.

Such poverty did not start with the trend toward "maturity" in science fiction. It started back in the old magazines when, after a body of "inventions" had been presented by the early authors, new writers came along (at the behest of editors and publishers who saw

that there was a market here) to write conventional pulp stories in these already-prepared backgrounds. And then, of course, a fair number of the now-veteran authors began to write different words to their old tunes. This is why so many readers who had enjoyed the earlier novels of Ray Cummings found the bulk of his work distressing after 1932. Faults, indeed, could be found in the earlier stories—but the later, increasingly tired rewrites showed little except the faults, magnified. For those who thought even the best of Cummings bad, the later works were just worse and worse.

But it is this particular quality of invention which makes science fiction a special type of literature, and I think this lies behind the feeling of many readers—not only the unthinking, either—that it is unfair to judge science fiction by the same standards that one judges mainstream writing. "Unfair" is an emotional term, and in the overall sense, such a contention won't wash—revising the standards in order to make your own favorites come out high belongs in the field of advertising or propaganda; but in a certain sense these readers are right. Good science fiction does require certain aspects of invention which other types of fiction do not, and it is absurd to pretend otherwise.

With any sort of fiction, extra strong invention can result in casting a spell over the reader even where the story is deficient in other respects—deficiencies which would be fatal to a story without a similar strength of invention. Thus the end is delight, and the charisma of invention triumphs over the defects and, in some instances, obscures them for all but the most close (and sometimes closed-minded) readers. But this sort of thing, I suspect, is more likely to happen in science fiction, and fantasy, than in other types.

The quality of invention is something that can be reported objectively. I can say it is there on the page, telling you what sort of invention it is, and you can check me out objectively. Either it is there where everyone can see it or it isn't. As to whether it actually casts a spell, that is subjective; the fact that it works on me is no proof that it will on you, and vice versa; but we can certainly discover easily enough whether it is there in the first place.

The other five qualities I am speaking of are subjective in nature; they all depend upon individual response, and if you do not see it, or do not experience it as delight, then I cannot in any way prove to you that it is there at all.

Suspense I shall define then only as that quality, whatever it may be in the particular instance, which keeps the reader's eyes fixed to the

page, and results in your resenting to have to put the story down. Now, as some know, I am myself a grasshopper-type reader. I like to read long stories in installments and take in several different works this way during one reading session. Most science fiction fits in well enough; but one of the reasons why I chose the authors I have chosen is that I have to exercise an awful lot of will power to read them this way—and in each case, I have found myself cheating, reading beyond my laid-out stopping point for this session, and resenting having to stop if I'm interrupted. (As we shall see later, this is not my prime consideration for the choices; but it has a lot to do with the reason why these authors were available to me.) As this is written, I find that it's exceptionally hard to put *Stranger in a Strange Land* aside—and I've never found it easy with Heinlein, either.

Characterization: Any work of fiction that is worth reading once is "about" some aspect of the human condition; those published works that are not (or are just barely) worth a single reading are those wherein the writer has manipulated various formulas and made no effort to breathe his own life into what he is writing—in some instances, has made a conscious effort to keep himself out of it.

In science fiction, invention may be part of characterization, functionally; and except in the long story, depth of character portrayal is likely to come at the expense of more important elements. Some writers use this situation as an excuse to pay little or no attention to characterization at all, with the result that there is no convincingness about what their characters say, feel, and do. And it makes no difference whether the author is writing an old-fashioned story in which the characters are not supposed to be much more than stereotypes or is trying to give the appearance of keeping up with the times. Neither Ned Land (*20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*) or Gilbert Gosseyn (*The World of a Null-A*) have any depth worth plumbing, but Ned Land is a believable character and Gosseyn is not. It so happens that I do not like Ned Land; but Gosseyn leaves me in a state of indifference bordering on the supernatural. (I remember his name the way you may remember the name of a particularly inept actor.)

Accepting things as they are, I shall look at my authors' characterization as that quality which results in my remembering a particular character or characters, with some sort of definite feelings of sympathy or antipathy, in a story long after I have read it. I do not recall more than a few of the incidents in the Verne novel—

but I do remember why I recall Ned Land with distaste and Captain Nemo with sympathy.

Surprise: Sir Donald Francis Tovey once wrote about Haydn's symphonies that while none of them were difficult to follow, nearly all of them were full of the unexpected. And I have found that the surprise element, when done well, remains as an element of delight upon repetition, even when you know full well it is coming. Ezra Pound once defined literature as "news that stays news". A positive surprise quality in a story maintains something of its freshness upon rereading.

One reason why so many one-shot or "surprise ending" stories fail, as Willian Atheling points out in *The Issue at Hand*, is that even if the "surprise" catches you the first time, its value is all used up in one reading; and the odds are against the author's catching the experienced reader off-guard even that one time. (A so-called "surprise ending" story that maintains its freshness is one in which that ending is really only incidental.)

Richness: This is the most difficult area of all to talk about; I am using this word here instead of beauty, because of the semantic difficulties with that word "beauty", which so many people equate with "prettiness", etc.

I am going to quote a definition from an obscure source, the privately-circulated *Gaelic* manuscript by Stewart Edward White, so that you will get a fair idea of my yardstick.

"Anything in the world consists of two things . . . in spite of the underlying unity. We have the life forces of a thing, and the material manifestation of that life force. Now, very simply, beauty is an exuberance of that life thing beyond the mere mechanical need of producing a manifestation.

"When this subtle, outspringing, basic quality is so abundant so overflowing, so vital, so oversufficing, that it not only models and molds and shapes its material into the form of life itself, but has to spare, so to speak—we have beauty. When the life force is not proportioned to the stubborness of the material through which it pushes the pattern of itself—when it is so lacking in vitality that it barely suffices to shadow itself forth in form—then we have ugliness.

"That applies through all that we call esthetics. It applies to material things of this world as we look about and see them; it applies also to the productions of men. If a man has spiritual capital enough, he can afford, and he delights in the ornamentation of his structure. If he is straitened for funds, he erects a shed to contain merely his utilities."

Now the speaker above is talk-

ing about material objects, buildings, etc., in speaking of "the productions of man" and "his structure"; but if this principle is valid—and my judgments are based upon the assumption that it is—then it certainly applies to the arts. And it shows why hack writing is almost necessarily ugly, although all ugly writing is not necessarily the production of a hack—one who writes *only* for money, or one who has played the hack in this or that particular instance. Hackwork involves self-impoverishment for the sake of something of lesser, rather than greater, value than that which is denied.

Reward: It goes without saying that a work which you have found delightful was rewarding to you, but I am thinking of something more than this in using the term; I am thinking of the measure of demands that the author makes upon you, the reader.

When a rather low-level reward value is cited, this does not necessarily imply a slur either upon the exhibit or the author. There is no reason why a work which asks nothing more of you that you pay attention while you are reading cannot be rewarding. There are times when this, and nothing more, is what we need.

But the highest reward level comes from that which makes decided demands upon you, and a great deal of what I can only think of as whining comes forth from readers who think (that isn't the right word, but such readers probably believe they are thinking, so we'll let it pass) that an author has not played fair with them when he demands more than they have to give or are willing to give. Grown-ups will either put such a work aside, without emotional display, as being beyond their capacities (at least for the present) or will rise to the challenge and make the effort. Children blame the author.

Demands may be stimulations to hard thinking (and putting aside one's biases or prejudices in order to look at what is being said, to re-examine one's own certainties, etc.), or to "feel" things beyond the second-hand level that one experiences in most "popular" fiction, etc. To meet an author's demands you may have to do some outside homework. And, in the end, no one can guarantee that you will find it worth the effort; my own feeling is that no such effort is entirely wasted, even if I did not care for the work after having made it.

These, then, are the ingredients I have selected for exploring science fiction as delight. In the next issue I am going to examine some science fiction authors in relation to these elements, for I see that we will not have space for the entire essay on the subject this time. RAWL

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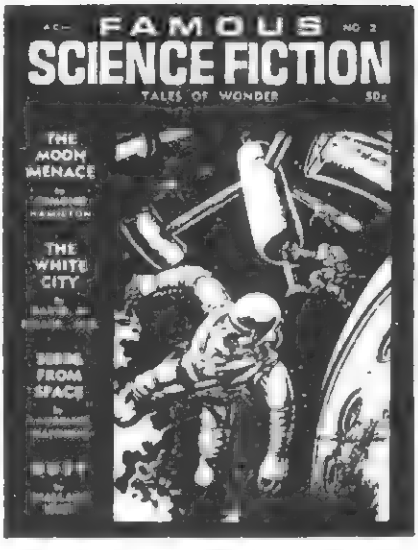

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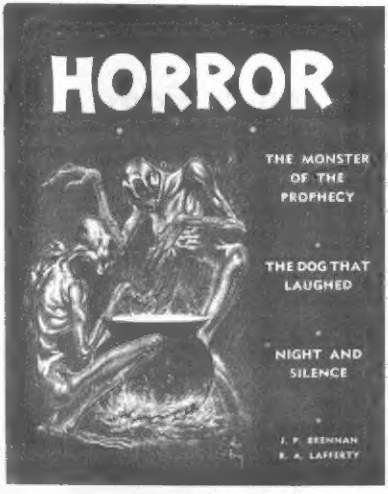

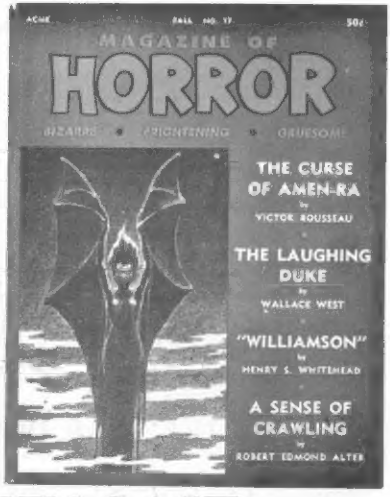

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